

Luton Infant and Nursery School

Alexandra Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 5AP

Inspection dates	25–26 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	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching and learning are not yet consistently good. This means that pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is not yet good by the end of Year 2 and so not all pupils are adequately prepared to continue their learning in key stage 2.
- Teachers do not always provide work that is sufficiently challenging for pupils of all abilities to move their learning forward at a rapid enough pace so they do not consistently make the progress needed to enable them to catch up from their low starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are not always provided with appropriate additional support to learn as well as they could.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged with appropriately demanding work.
- Pupils who are learning English as an additional language in the Buttercups class have too few opportunities to learn with their peers who speak English to benefit from good language and learning role models.
- Leadership of special educational needs is not yet having a full impact on the quality of teaching and learning and achievement for this group.
- The school improvement plan does not give measurable, robust targets so senior leaders and governors cannot effectively evaluate the impact of actions taken.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have made important improvements in the school since the previous inspection. Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are now good. Attendance has improved.
- There are many examples of good teaching and learning which have helped to improve pupils' progress. Staff work hard and respond well to opportunities to further develop their skills.
- Children get a good start in the early years. They settle quickly when they arrive and enjoy learning.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. They have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They feel safe in school.
- Governors are well informed about pupils' attainment and progress, which enables them to provide greater challenge to senior leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so it is consistently good or better in order to strengthen outcomes for pupils and ensure they are more adequately prepared for key stage 2 by:
 - providing work that is more effectively matched to the needs of learners including the most able pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language.
- Ensure that school development planning includes measurable targets at different points in the year so that senior leaders and governors can accurately evaluate the impact and success of their work.
- Develop the role of the leader of special educational needs so that there is a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Senior leaders and governors have made some considerable improvements since the previous inspection. In particular, behaviour and attendance have improved and are now good. Pupils' progress has improved but not quickly enough to have a marked impact on pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1, which remains significantly below the national average.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors share, along with staff, the determination to move the school to good. Currently, however, although teaching and learning have improved and much is good, the quality is still inconsistent across the school and pupils' progress is uneven across classes and for different groups. The pace of improvement has been hindered to some extent by staffing difficulties and absences.
- Despite good provision in the early years, pupils do not continue to catch up quickly enough by the end of Year 2 to be adequately prepared to continue their learning in key stage 2.
- There are clear systems established to check on teachers' performance linked to the progress pupils make. Year group leaders ensure that teachers know they are accountable for the progress of pupils in their class. Higher expectations are shared with staff and there is a shared sense of purpose and enthusiasm to continue and increase the pace of improvement. Where weaknesses are identified, teachers and teaching assistants receive appropriate support, training and guidance and underperformance is challenged.
- Leadership capacity has been increased very recently with two assistant headteachers who are also English and mathematics subject leaders and year group leaders. A new leader for special educational needs joined in September.
- Middle and subject leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and areas of responsibility and have action plans for improvement. The impact of their work has resulted in greater consistency in the approaches to teaching and learning. This is particularly the case in English where leadership of the subject has been established for some time. There has not been enough time to see the full impact of the work of recently appointed leaders on the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' outcomes.
- The school development plan gives a clear steer for actions to bring about further improvement. The targets set for different points in the year, however, are not always clearly measurable to enable leaders and governors to check how effective actions have been.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted and the progress of all groups is checked rigorously. Leaders are aware that not all groups achieve as well as they are capable of.
- The school fosters good relationships between all pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through the school's values and the curriculum. Staff ensure that pupils respect each other whatever their backgrounds or cultures. Pupils are adequately prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on teaching and learning in literacy and mathematics. Other subjects are usually linked to interesting topics and themes, which engage the interest of pupils. The curriculum is enriched by extra activities such as clubs, trips and visitors to school that motivate pupils as well as giving them opportunities to learn new skills.
- The school is making effective use of the primary school physical education and sport funding. The funding is spent in a range of ways to enhance the existing provision for physical education. These include membership of the Premier Sports scheme, participation in an after-school gym club and an increased range of after-school and lunchtime clubs in partnership with professional sports coaches. These activities help to enhance the skills of pupils and teachers and therefore improve outcomes for pupils.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Although gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally increased in 2015, particularly in writing, school information shows that pupils currently in the school are making progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, other pupils in the school.
- Very few parents responded to Parent View and so it is difficult to report accurately on their overall views. The few who did respond, and those spoken to at the start of the day and those who responded to the school's own recent survey were mainly positive. There was particular agreement about how well the school cares for their children and the friendly, welcoming and approachable teachers. One parent wrote:

'The dedication of the staff towards my daughter has been amazing and I cannot fault them. They have supported her very well since she started and the care she has received is so good.' Some concerns were expressed, however, and inspectors agree that leaders need to build relationships with all groups in the school community to secure parents' confidence in the school.

- Effective support from the local authority has included training to improve the teaching of phonics, which has been much appreciated by staff and is having a positive impact on pupils' phonics skills.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has strengthened since the previous inspection. The governing body initiated an external review of its work after the previous inspection, which has helped to strengthen its effectiveness. The governing body now has a clear overview of pupils' attainment and progress because it is well informed by senior leaders and its own monitoring visits. Governors checked that they have the necessary skills to hold senior leaders to account and recruited associate members where gaps were identified.
 - Governors oversee the performance management process and know that pay progression and promotion are linked to pupils' progress. The governing body is aware of the impact of additional funding and how it is making a difference for pupils. They are able to compare the attainment of, for example, disadvantaged pupils with others, from information provided by senior leaders.
 - Governors fully support the actions of the headteacher and deputy headteacher that have been taken to tackle underperformance in teaching and learning. They are not always able to check the impact of actions taken against the milestones in the school improvement plan priorities when the impact is not linked to measurable targets.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All requirements are fully met. Policies are up to date and procedures are robust, including those involving outside agencies to benefit pupils. Procedures are established to check staff suitability. The site is safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because, despite some more effective and good teaching, leading to improving progress for pupils, inconsistencies remain across classes.
- There is some variation between classes in how well teachers provide work that is demanding enough to challenge pupils to make the best possible progress. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils or what they can achieve in a lesson or over time. There are some good examples of teachers' and teaching assistants' skilled questioning that promotes pupils' depth of knowledge, skills and understanding; however, this is not at the same level in all classes.
- Work for the most able pupils is not always sufficiently demanding to enable them to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. Sometimes pupils have to complete work that is easy for them before they move on to more challenging tasks and so do not always have time to make the progress of which they are capable.
- In contrast to this, some pupils struggle with learning when the work is not clearly understood or they do not receive appropriate support, for example in understanding the vocabulary used. This is often the case, but not exclusively, for some pupils who have special educational needs or disability. As a result, their progress can slow.
- Year 1 and 2 pupils in the Buttercups class share their playtimes with others and join in with some activities such as assemblies. They have fewer opportunities, however, to interact and learn with their peers who speak English fluently to benefit from good language and learning role models and as a consequence do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some pupils in Buttercups class who have made good gains in acquiring English language skills are not sufficiently challenged at times to make more rapid progress in their learning.
- Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning and the good relationships they have with teachers mean that they try hard and want to do well. The most successful learning occurs when pupils are fully engaged and interested in the tasks provided.
- Pupils in Year 1, for example, were fully engaged and motivated when learning about two-dimensional shapes and their properties. Clear instructions and good questioning helped pupils to increase the depth of their knowledge, skills and understanding and expectations were high for pupils' engagement and learning.

- A recent approach to teaching writing which gives pupils the opportunity to talk and share ideas before putting pencil to paper is having a good impact and teachers are enthusiastic about this approach. Pupils in Year 2 were thoroughly enjoying writing newspaper reports about the sinking of the *Titanic* and made good progress in understanding what makes a good headline, writing in the past tense and using punctuation to enhance their reports.
- Pupils greatly enjoyed a music lesson where they sang and used drums to explore pitch and rhythm. Their good behaviour and engagement helped them learn well. They were challenged to improve and all groups achieved well because of the teacher's good subject knowledge and the effective support given by teaching assistants.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge was also evident in science lessons where pupils were exploring the differences between herbivores and carnivores. Pupils were engaged and fascinated by the subject. Even here, though, there was a lack of challenge for the most able pupils and too little effective support for those learning English and pupils who have special educational needs. As a result, pupils did not learn as well as they could.
- In reading, a focus has been on improving boys' achievement through the use of resources to appeal to all pupils but boys in particular. Teachers have welcomed additional training to further their skills in teaching phonics and working with small groups to improve pupils' understanding of the texts they are reading. This is successfully helping to improve pupils' phonics and reading skills and ensure they make more rapid progress. Additional one-to-one support for some pupils by an experienced and skilled teacher is making a difference for the individuals involved and accelerating their progress in reading.
- The new mathematics leader has quickly identified priorities for teaching and learning. These include providing more problem-solving activities and a greater use of a range of resources to support the learning of all pupils, but particularly pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to meet the increased challenges and higher expectations required to improve pupils' achievement. Year group teams are very supportive of each other and benefit from advice and support from the year group leaders. Most teachers are enthusiastic, keen to take advice and learn from leaders and colleagues in other schools about improving the quality of their teaching. Staff are good role models for pupils, prompting respect and good relationships between pupils. Routines for pupils' behaviour and learning are clear and pupils know what is expected of them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most parents who responded to the online survey or the school's survey agree that their children are happy at school and are well looked after.
- Pupils' welfare and safety is paramount in the school and several parents agreed that teachers 'go the extra mile for their children'. Staff know the pupils' personal needs very well and ensure that any specific welfare requirements are met.
- Pupils enjoy their time in school and they have good attitudes to learning. A group of pupils agreed with one who said, 'It's fun and we learn lots of things.' Pupils are friendly and well mannered.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know what to do to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, for example on the roads and at the beach. They understand what they should and should not do when using the internet.
- Pupils say that there is not really any bullying at school but sometimes some children are 'a bit mean'. However, they are confident to turn to adults if they have any worries or problems, and secure in the fact that adults are really good at sorting things out. One pupil said, 'I don't like people being mean to me but when I'm sad I can talk to an adult or my friend.' In their questionnaire all pupils agree that teachers encourage them to be friendly towards other pupils, respect people from other backgrounds and treat everyone equally.
- The home-school support worker makes a significant contribution to supporting pupils and their families who may be vulnerable and to help reduce any barriers to learning.
- Attendance is improving and is currently much closer to the national average than it has been over the

past two years. This is because the school works diligently to promote regular attendance by all pupils and works with an external agency to help achieve this. The attendance of different groups and individuals is robustly tracked and analysed. The home-school support worker plays a large part in supporting families where children are persistently absent. Punctuality to school has also improved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection.
- After the previous inspection leaders made several changes to playtime and lunchtime routines. As a result, pupils conduct themselves well around the school and in the playground.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful. They play well together and behave well in lessons, responding promptly to teachers' instructions. They respond well to praise for demonstrating positive behaviour such as good listening and good thinking.
- Occasionally, pupils lose focus in lessons when they are not fully engaged in their learning and become quietly distracted and then do not make as much progress as they should.
- A small number of pupils find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour and they receive good support from staff and usually settle quickly as a result. School records confirm that the number of behaviour incidents has decreased over time.
- Most parents and staff agree that the school ensures pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because it is not yet good in all classes. Although improving, progress is uneven because the quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistent.
- The school's information shows that by the end of Year 2 pupils make progress from their low starting points and progress is improving for the pupils currently in key stage 1.
- However, despite the fact that an increasing number of pupils make better than expected progress, overall progress is not consistently rapid enough for pupils to fully catch up in their learning and lift their attainment by the end of Year 2.
- In the national tests in 2015, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was significantly below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the pattern for the past five years.
- Up until 2014 there was an upward trend but this dipped in 2015. To some extent this was because of the profile of the Year 2 cohort, with higher than usual proportions in vulnerable groups.
- In 2015 the proportion of most-able pupils who reached the higher level was below average in reading and mathematics and significantly below in writing.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 2 in 2015 was behind that of other pupils in the school and others nationally and the gap between them and other pupils nationally increased from the previous year. Since then disadvantaged pupils currently in the school, like other pupils, are beginning to make faster progress. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils currently working at the expectations for their age is above that of other pupils in Year 2. In Year 1 the proportion is above in reading, slightly below in mathematics but considerably below in writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making similar progress to others, which means that progress is uneven across the school although it is improving. Leaders have correctly identified the need to ensure that class teaching and any additional support for this group meets pupils' learning needs securely and effectively. The new leader for special educational needs is completing the required training for her role. She quickly identified weaknesses in the provision and the areas that require improving and provides helpful guidance and support to colleagues. The full impact of her developing work on provision and outcomes for this group is yet to be realised.
- The work in pupils' books since September shows that progress is improving in reading, writing and mathematics and a range of other subjects as pupils become more confident and self-assured learners. Leaders correctly identified writing as the weakest subject. As a result there is significant investment in ongoing training for staff to implement a new approach to teaching and learning in writing. The impact of this is already evident in pupils' work.
- In the 2015 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) for pupils in Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard was below the national figure. There was a considerable gap between boys' achievement and girls', with boys doing less well than girls in the school and less well than boys nationally. This was in part due to the number of boys who arrived in Year 1 who

did not speak English and did not have time to catch up. Pupils currently in the school are making faster progress in phonics learning as a result of more effective teaching.

- The school's information on pupils' progress show that children who have been at school in the early years continue to make more rapid progress in key stage 1 than those who start at school in Year 1 or Year 2. Pupils who arrive during key stage 1 often have no prior school experience and are learning English as an additional language. Their progress, however, although improving, is not fast enough to help them catch up in their learning by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils who are learning English as an additional language in the Buttercups class often do not make rapid enough progress because expectations are not always high enough. They are not always sufficiently challenged in their learning once they have acquired a level of competency in English. This was evident, for example, in their learning of phonics where the demands of work were not great enough to ensure that many of the group made the more rapid progress of which they were capable. In 2015, the gap widened between the attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language and others.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Nursery or Reception classes with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their ages in all areas of learning and particularly in their communication and language skills and their personal, social and emotional development.
- Many children do not start in the Nursery or Reception classes at the beginning of the school year but join at various points throughout the year. For example, in 2015, 15% of the group did not start at the beginning of the Reception Year. Children often arrive at school with very few or no English language skills.
- From their low starting points, children make good progress. The proportion that reached a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2015 improved from the previous year; however, it remained below that found nationally. As a consequence, some children, mainly those who had not spent enough time in the early years to catch up, were not as well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1 as others. In 2015 there was also an improvement from the previous year in boys' achievement. Although their achievement still lags behind girls in the school and boys nationally, the gaps narrowed.
- The early years is led very effectively by the experienced deputy headteacher, who ensures that the provision is good so that children get a positive start to school. Where any weaknesses in teaching are identified, she provides effective support to ensure that children's learning is not compromised.
- There is a determined and successful focus on children's speech and language, writing, phonics and reading skills as well as interesting and engaging activities across all areas of learning. The teachers have been involved in a research project which has improved teaching and learning in shape, space and measure.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide motivating and interesting activities that nurture and challenge the children. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Children happily make choices for themselves. Their independence is generally promoted well. On occasion in the Nursery adults do things for the children that they could be encouraged to do for themselves.
- Adults use questioning well to model speaking and vocabulary and provide good role models for the children. A record of achievements is kept in learning journals, which include information from parents who are encouraged to record 'wow' moments for their children.
- There are good procedures to get to know children and their families before they start and a smooth transition for those who move into Reception from the Nursery.
- Children learn and play in a safe and secure environment. Staff make good use of the outdoor space, particularly in the Reception area. The outdoor Nursery space is used well but is very small and only half of the children in a session are able to be outside at any given time.
- Children behave well and learn to share and cooperate with each other. Staff provide a welcoming, friendly atmosphere where children are happy and settle calmly into the routines of the day.
- All procedures to safeguard children and ensure the welfare requirements appropriate to their age groups are met. All the necessary actions are taken to support any child whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

School details

Unique reference number	118319
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10012266

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beverley Garrett
Headteacher	Sue Lythgoe
Telephone number	01634 843 019
Website	lutoninf.medway.sch.uk
Email address	office@lutoninf.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2014

Information about this school

- Luton Infant and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized infant school and Nursery provision.
- Just under one half of the pupils are of White British heritage. Around one third of the pupils are from any other White backgrounds, mainly from Roma and Slovak backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is almost double the national figure. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above average.
- Children in the three Reception classes attend full-time. Children in the Nursery attend for a morning or afternoon session. There are three classes organised in ability groups in each of Year 1 and Year 2.
- Newly arrived pupils to Year 1 and Year 2 who do not speak English or who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are taught in a separate class known as Buttercups.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club which was part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons, many of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at work in pupils' books. They observed pupils at break and lunchtime and asked them for their views on the school. Inspectors also talked to pupils about reading and listened to some read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other staff with key leadership responsibilities, governors and the local authority school challenge and improvement adviser.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; improvement plans; information on pupils' attainment and progress; and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at the 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, that included 10 written comments, spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and received one letter. In addition, inspectors looked at the responses to the school's own parental survey conducted in March 2016. Inspectors also took account of 30 questionnaires returned by staff and 20 returned by pupils.

Inspection team

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