

Lansdowne Primary Academy

Lansdowne Road, Tilbury, Essex RM18 7QB

Inspection dates	20–21 July 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Lansdowne School has improved significantly since the previous inspection, and particularly in the last year the momentum has quickened further.
- The principal's uncompromising determination, ably supported by her deputy and other school leaders, has driven substantial improvements. In particular, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are both good.
- Governors are effective. They are ambitious for all pupils to benefit from high-quality education.
- Leaders have successfully created a culture of high expectations for all.
- The school benefits from its participation in the Gateway Learning Community Trust on many levels and in many ways.
- Additional pupil premium funding is used very imaginatively and makes a significant impact on the good progress of eligible pupils.
- The school nurtures pupils well, giving struggling pupils extra help so they can find ways to cope and return to class and thrive.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities flourish because provision is tailored to each individual's needs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The curriculum is enriched by many exciting opportunities to participate in events.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground.
- Pupils say they feel safe and happy at the school, and well cared for by staff.
- Early years provision is good. Children settle quickly, make good progress and enter Year 1 fully prepared for the next stage in their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few teachers, and other adults, do not respond effectively enough when pupils struggle, or find the work too easy.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to reason and solve problems.
- Some pupils do not display positive attitudes to learning, and this is detrimental to their progress.
- The school only offers limited support to those parents who would like more help to understand how best to help their children learn at home.
- Attendance, while improving, is still too low overall and for particular groups of children.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring teachers:
 - regularly check and adjust their teaching during lessons according to how well pupils are doing so that all make good or better progress
 - intervene at appropriate points in pupils' learning to clarify, challenge or deepen their understanding
 - provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills to reason and solve problems.

- Further improve pupils' attitudes to learning so they make better progress by ensuring that:
 - pupils try harder to finish tasks they are given and present them more neatly
 - staff consistently promote the qualities of good learning, such as resilience and perseverance, and develop pupils' stamina and capacity to keep going by themselves.

- Seek further ways to work with parents so that:
 - parents become effective partners fully able to support their children's learning at home
 - persistent absence is further reduced and all groups of pupils improve their attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- School leaders, governors and staff share a strong determination to build further on recent improvements and offer pupils high-quality education. The vast majority of staff responding to their survey agree that the school's culture is aspirational for pupils and encourages calm and orderly behaviour.
- School leaders clearly understand what the school does well and where it needs to improve. They use this information wisely to plan improvements.
- School leaders form an effective team. The principal's drive and energy is at the heart of school improvement. The deputy principal ably supports her. Assistant principals ensure each section of the school runs smoothly and efficiently.
- Within the learning community, leaders explore every avenue to successfully ensure sufficient good-quality staff. Whether through the apprentice scheme or links with universities, leaders make sure Lansdowne is fully staffed with well-qualified staff. This is a significant factor in pupils' good progress.
- School leaders accept no compromise in the drive for high-quality teaching. Each academic year begins with induction and training in the school's approaches. Every week, school leaders check these are fully implemented and hold teachers and learning support assistants to account if they are not.
- Staff morale is high. Teamwork is seen as a particular strength. One teacher said, 'There isn't anyone I couldn't ask for help.' Any who struggle to meet the school's high standards say they receive a clear, step-by-step improvement plan and the training and advice they need to achieve its aims.
- Leaders' deployment of the team of able, well-trained learning support assistants is effective. They work directly with pupils and make a significant contribution to pupils' good progress.
- Subjects are generally well led. All subject leaders, but particularly those new or inexperienced, benefit greatly from working alongside their equivalents from other learning community schools.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and much improved since the previous inspection. Extra help is closely matched to each individual's needs. The expertise of the learning community's special needs coordinator is very beneficial, particularly in putting the right systems and procedures in place.
- The resource base is well led and managed. Pupils learn well because the layout of the room and structure of the day promotes their learning. Staff teaching these pupils are well trained and know when to help them and when to let them try for themselves.
- The curriculum is broad. Activities interest and engage pupils so they want to learn. Good improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics ensure pupils' progress is good. Pertinent visits and visitors, closely linked to topic work, help enrich pupils' interest and deepen their learning. Pupils enjoy many additional enrichment opportunities provided through the learning community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Teachers skilfully explore moral issues through philosophical questions. Pupils reflect on their own lives and understand themselves and their community better. Pupils discuss 'big questions', such as 'Is the cocoa bean industry fair trade?'
- Pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain is promoted effectively. In Year 5, one class explored 'prejudice'. One girl explained that you should not judge people by the way they look.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is strong. Pupils understand 'democracy' and the importance of everyone's vote to a collective decision. The elected junior leadership team has a voice in the school, for example zoning the playground for different activities and rewriting the packed lunch policy.
- Leaders' imaginative use of pupil premium funding promotes the academic and personal development of eligible pupils. Extra lessons, such as 'Saturday Club', boost pupils' progress. Those with low self-esteem or social skills benefit from the very nurturing ethos of the nurture provision. All gain from wider curriculum opportunities in the sports and arts.
- Effective use of primary school sports funding benefits pupils and staff. Specialist coaching enables pupils to learn new techniques and skills, while staff learn how to teach sports more effectively. Pupils' clear understanding of the benefit of exercise to healthy living is demonstrated in their enthusiasm for their energetic 'daily mile' exercise. One pupil said, 'We keep active. It helps our brains work in class.'
- Links with other schools in the learning community are very strong. Staff and pupils enjoy and benefit greatly from working together. By following an identical curriculum and similar teaching approaches, all pupils are well prepared for the learning community's secondary school.

- The local authority, too, plays a role in supporting the school. For example, checks are made of the school's assessments of pupils' progress. Pupils participate in wider opportunities such as ballet classes.
- Four in every five of the small number of parents responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, would recommend the school to another parent. The vast majority of parents spoken to during the inspection were equally positive. Parents' growing involvement indicates the beginnings of a positive shift in attitude. However, the proportion of parents attending to discuss their children's learning remains relatively low. Some parents told inspectors they would like more help to understand the school's approaches, particularly to literacy and numeracy, so they are better able to help their children at home.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors share the leaders' and learning community's ambition for the school to provide high-quality education for pupils. Each governor's skills are usefully deployed so governance is efficient.
 - Checks on the progress of pupils are analysed carefully to ensure pupils do well and to question and challenge school leaders when they do not.
 - Governors oversee the performance of staff, including teachers, rigorously. Decisions about pay increases are based on a wide range of evidence.
 - Governors know their school well. A recently appointed governor, for example, has visited to see the different approaches for herself. As a result, she is better placed to make informed decisions.
 - Governors are robust; they say, 'We all learn from our mistakes, make no excuses and move on.' For example, leaders and governors analysed this year's test results and are already making changes.
 - Governors work closely with the learning community. For example, annual training days shared with governors from other trust schools build their expertise, share understanding and agree policies.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors ensure all staff and governor training is up to date and that the school fully complies with the latest safeguarding guidance. Governors and school staff are fully aware of their duty to keep pupils safe. The school clearly explains to parents its role in safeguarding their children. Most parents responding to Parent View agree that their children feel safe at the school and are well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. In particular, teaching is now far more consistent between classes and year groups, so most pupils make good progress.
- Staff's pride and commitment is evident. Teamwork is a strong feature, sharing ideas and expertise to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Those responding to the staff survey overwhelmingly agree that school leaders trust them to be innovative in ways that are right for pupils.
- Pupils behave well because they know what is expected of them. Pupils move quickly from one activity to another because they know and obey their teachers' 'silent signals' and key phrases.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are positive. As a result, very little learning time is lost.
- Planning is clear and the basis of good lesson structure. Year group teachers work with peers from other learning community schools. They share expertise and ideas to contribute to plans that engage pupils.
- Teachers give pupils accurate and regular feedback, closely following the school's policy. Pupils say they find this helpful. Pupils generally incorporate their teachers' suggestions in their subsequent work.
- Well-trained learning support assistants enable pupils who struggle with specific skills or knowledge to make good progress.
- The teaching of speaking and listening is effective because pupils respond positively to staff's high expectations that they answer in full sentences. Staff themselves provide good role models.
- Reading skills are taught well because staff are fully trained and all use the school's approaches. As a result, pupils know what to expect and what is expected of them. For example, phonics teaching (the link between letters and sounds) follows the same techniques and lesson structure in all classes. Staff promote reading well. They challenge pupils to 'be caught reading'.
- Writing skills are taught equally well. Again, teachers are well trained in the approach they use. Skills are practised and honed in a good variety of writing styles. As a result, pupils generally make good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics skills is good. Staff subject knowledge is good, an important improvement since the last inspection. Staff praise and reward pupils for learning key facts such as multiplication

tables. Opportunities to reason and problem-solve, however, are more limited.

- Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Resource-base staff teach specific skills so that these pupils can transfer successfully to general classes and pursue learning alongside their peers. Pupils' self-knowledge is promoted because each has a 'passport' containing next steps in learning in child-friendly language.
- Questioning is generally used effectively. In a reading activity, for example, the teacher encouraged pupils to use skills such as inference with her questions, such as 'What do you think will happen next?'
- Teachers demonstrate high expectations of the content of their pupils' work and that pupils write in a neat and legible style. Presentation of work, however, needs to improve.
- Staff sometimes do not recognise the appropriate point to intervene, particularly in group work. As a result, they sometimes step in too early and pupils come to rely on their help. This denies pupils the opportunity to persevere and keep going for themselves.
- During lessons, teachers sometimes do not check sufficiently how their pupils are doing, in order to reshape their teaching.
- Effective use of homework promotes pupils' learning. Some activities practise pupils' basic skills, such as spelling. Others offer pupils opportunities to research and delve more deeply into interesting projects.
- Nine out of the 11 parents responding to Parent View agree that their children are well taught and all agree that their children are making good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. All parents responding to Parent View, and those spoken to, feel that their children are happy at the school.
- Pupils' learning benefits from working together. During the inspection, for example, Year 5 pupils, working with partners, offered helpful suggestions and learned from each other. One boy said, 'I have improved my play script by adding stage directions with brackets.'
- Pupils' social development is strong. Pupils of both sexes and all ethnic groups mix and play together well. They say, 'This is a good school, everyone works together and no one gets left out.'
- Pupils talk positively about learning. When asked what is best, they reply, 'You learn lots of new things' and 'Every lesson has something to look forward to.'
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. Pupils demonstrate many traits of an effective learner, such as a good work ethic. However, some give up too easily because they do not have the stamina or motivation to complete tasks, and will wait for an adult to help.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to help. Pupils' leadership, for example at playtimes, has been beneficial. 'Anti-bullying ambassadors' look after lonely pupils and encourage them to join in with games and activities.
- Staff effectively promote pupils' well-being. The very effective nurture provision helps pupils grappling with schoolwork or the dynamics of the classroom. Pupils receive valuable extra help from this specialist team and most are able to follow the same curriculum as their peers.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Whether on the roads or the internet, they know the signs to look out for and what to do if they are worried.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils spoken to during the inspection all agreed that behaviour had improved in the recent past. Around three quarters of the parents responding to Parent View agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- The school is very inclusive. Pupils struggling to manage their own behaviour receive excellent support and guidance, particularly from the nurture provision team. Able staff teach pupils how to manage their own behaviour so that these pupils quickly return to the classroom and stay there.
- The school's proactive approach is a significant reason why the rate of exclusion is falling rapidly. Pupils at risk of exclusion join a motivational group that targets key areas of behaviour. Since it started, no pupil in this group has been excluded.
- Pupils fully understand what is expected of them because they know the school's rules, that there are

rewards and consequences, and that staff consistently apply them. Staff resolve issues quickly, calmly and firmly. Although the emphasis is on rewarding positive behaviour, staff do not tolerate misbehaviour.

- 'Doing the right thing' is a focus of school life, publicly affirmed in assemblies. Effort, attendance and good habits such as regular reading at home are rewarded, as are traits such as helpfulness.
- Behaviour at play and lunchtimes is much improved because provision is better. Midday supervisors effectively promote positive play. A wide variety of activities, from theatre to aerobics to speed-stacking, offer pupils numerous opportunities. On other occasions, pupils invent their own imaginative games.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying have decreased. They say that they feel safe in the school, well cared for and that there are adults they can talk to if they are worried. Parents spoken to all said that bullying is quickly dealt with and resolved.
- Attendance has improved this year but remains below average. The school is well supported by the learning community. Staff offer many rewards and incentives to encourage good attendance. The excellent breakfast club offers an incentive to pupils with poor punctuality. However, there remains a small proportion of pupils who are regularly absent. This group also includes pupils eligible for extra support, who consequently do not gain as much as they could from this extra investment.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. The strong focus on improving the quality of teaching has eradicated the variations in pupils' progress reported at the previous inspection.
- The school's own checks on progress, and the quality of work in pupils' books, show that the vast majority of pupils now make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 6, for example, generally learn in three terms what they are expected to learn in five terms in reading and mathematics. The rate of learning is faster still in writing.
- These improvements are the result of school and learning community leaders taking very effective action so that pupils make faster progress. This has a positive and cumulative effect. For example, improvements mean that the proportion of children leaving the early years with a good level of development is much higher than previously. This strong foundation gives pupils a better start for teachers to build on in Year 1.
- The proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016 was roughly three quarters. Although still a little below the national average, this represents a large improvement on 2015 when just over half passed.
- Results also improved at the end of Year 2. Approximately two thirds of pupils reached or exceeded age-related expectations in reading, and six in every 10 in writing and mathematics. Although not high, these results also represent a large increase on the previous years, when results were significantly below the national average in all three of these important subjects.
- The inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' progress reported at the previous inspection mean that, even though teaching is now good, it has not been so over time. This particularly affects older pupils who have been at the school longer. As a result, these pupils have a legacy of lower standards.
- Leaders' accurate assessments identify gaps in older pupils' learning. These pupils receive carefully targeted 'catch-up' sessions with able learning support assistants. This enables pupils to make up lost ground. Even so, some gaps remain. For example, in Year 6, some pupils say they were not able to answer test questions asking them to reason mathematically.
- Generally, disadvantaged pupils make progress quicker than their peers. As a result, they are closing the attainment gap. This is largely because the school is highly effective at identifying each individual's barriers to learning and providing appropriate support.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, although often from lower starting points. Staff, ably assisted by the learning community, accurately identify each individual's needs and tailor support to meet them. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
- The resourced provision provides these pupils with good specialist support so they can often learn alongside their peers in general classes. As a result, they make good progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils make good progress. These pupils regularly receive harder work that challenges them sufficiently.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge well below those typical of their age. Children settle quickly because of good arrangements so their move into Nursery is smooth. Children make good progress because activities are closely matched to their needs and interests. About two in five children transfer to other schools when entering Reception.
- The move to Reception, whether from the Nursery or elsewhere, is equally well organised and the good pace of learning continues. In 2016, two thirds of the children reached or exceeded a good level of development, a large increase from 2015 when the equivalent figure was just over half the children.
- The early years provision caters for all children's needs well. Staff closely link activities for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to their needs. The most able children benefit from learning key skills such as phonics with Year 1.
- The structure and organisation of the day is very clear to children. They quickly learn what is expected of them. Many of the school's approaches, such as 'silent signals', start in early years so children are very familiar with them as they move into Year 1.
- Children's personal development is strong. Children willingly take turns, share and work together, such as when building a den. They cooperate well with each other and staff.
- Inside and out, children enjoy many stimulating activities. Activities have a clear purpose, often linked to a theme, so new learning in one area reinforces previous learning in another. However, opportunities for children to choose to mark-make or explore numbers are fewer outside than in.
- Basic skills are taught well. Adults ensure children pronounce letter sounds accurately. They spot when children are unclear and give more examples. Staff's effective use of memorable rhymes and visual gestures aids children's learning. Staff promote reading effectively; they encourage children into the habit of reading and enrol them at the public library.
- Teaching is effective. Adults seize opportunities to extend children's thinking. For example, a group counting is asked, 'What is one more?' Staff recognise children's interest is high and extend this to halves and doubles. Technology is used effectively; children's fascination when watching stingrays move over a coral reef leads to an abundance of interest and questions to explore. However, adults do not regularly plan opportunities for children to pursue for themselves the interest aroused in adult-led activities.
- Learning journeys accurately track the progress of each child in all areas of learning. Children experience a wide range of activities. For example, they make good progress in shape, data handling and writing number sentences.
- Relationships with parents are positive. Meetings when children join early years are well attended. Parents are invited to contribute to their children's learning journeys, and some do so. Some parents also attend events when the school's approach to teaching key skills such as phonics is explained. Some parents struggle to support their children's learning at home because they themselves struggle with literacy and numeracy. The school offers limited help to address these needs.
- Leadership is effective. Clear plans exist for future improvements. Additional funding is used effectively. Safeguarding children is seen as paramount. Staff give children regular reminders and care for them well.

School details

Unique reference number	138048
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10011862

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	School sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	703
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ade Shodipe
Principal	Monique Anderson
Telephone number	01375 487200
Website	www.theglc-lansdowne.org.uk
Email address	admin.lansdowne@theglc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than an average-sized primary school.
- In the Nursery there are two classes. Children attend part time in the morning or afternoon. Each session lasts three hours. In each other year group, from Reception to Year 6, there are three classes.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average. This is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The overall proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school operates a resourced provision for pupils with learning and social communication difficulties.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school operates a breakfast club five days a week.
- Lansdowne Primary Academy is a sponsored school within the Gateway Learning Community Trust (GLC). The GLC is sponsored by the Ormiston Trust.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms. Some observations were conducted jointly with the principal, deputy principal or an assistant principal. In addition, the inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the principal, other leaders, teachers and governors. Inspectors also met with representatives of the Gateway Learning Community Trust.
- The inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences at the school.
- The views of 11 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. The inspectors also considered the views of 27 members of staff who responded to their online survey.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documents and information. These included the school's development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. The inspectors also looked at arrangements for and records of safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

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