

Larkspur Community Primary School

Beacon Lough East, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 6SS

Inspection dates

11–12 October 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is variable across key stages 1 and 2. As a result, not enough pupils are making consistently strong progress from their starting points, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders have an overly positive view of the school's effectiveness. They have not set sufficiently ambitious targets to secure improvements quickly enough in the school.
- Work set by teachers for pupils does not always challenge the most able to achieve as well as they can. Too few pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not consistently making the faster progress required to help them to catch up with other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Too many pupils form letters incorrectly and have untidy handwriting. Pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills, although improving, remain below expected levels.
- The tasks set for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not always give them the best chance to make rapid progress.
- Not all staff have the subject knowledge they need to help pupils to make rapid gains in their phonics knowledge.
- Governors do not have the skills and knowledge they need to challenge senior leaders to improve some aspects of the school. They have not checked closely enough on the difference that additional government funding is making to the progress of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. Staff know children well and provide the right activities to help them learn. The proportion of children achieving the skills they need in preparation for Year 1 has improved.
- Pupils are happy, attend school regularly and behave well. They have a keen understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect and are well prepared to become good citizens.
- Parents are positive about the relationship they have with the school. They feel well informed and are confident that any issues that arise are swiftly tackled by staff.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are highly effective. The headteacher is tenacious in following up any concerns about pupils. Staff have an acute awareness of the importance of this aspect of their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - systems to monitor teachers' performance and to track the progress made by pupils are precisely focused on the proportions of pupils making better than expected progress, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able
 - the school's plans include ambitious and measurable targets to improve pupils' progress, including the progress of the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - governors have the necessary skills and knowledge to hold leaders to account fully for all aspects of the school's work, particularly in relation to the outcomes achieved by pupils and the information the school is required to publish online
 - additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is evaluated robustly, so that it is used to best effect.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that more pupils make better than expected progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, by making sure that:
 - all staff have the necessary subject knowledge to help pupils to make rapid progress in their phonics knowledge
 - lower-attaining pupils are given books to read which they can access with their current phonics knowledge, so that they become more confident readers
 - all staff have high expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - work set for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make consistently strong progress from their starting points
 - issues with pupils' correct letter formation and handwriting are quickly addressed
 - teachers devote more attention to the improvement of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills
 - pupils are given frequent opportunities to develop and articulate their mathematical reasoning.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- While leaders correctly identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching across the school, their view of the overall effectiveness of teaching has been overgenerous. Although leaders have taken effective action to eradicate the weakest teaching since the previous inspection, inconsistencies remain across some year groups in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders do not always make best use of information about the progress pupils have made to accurately judge the impact of their work to improve teaching.
- The school's action plan for improvement is not sharply focused on improving the pace at which pupils make progress, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Outcomes for pupils are not improving as quickly as they should in reading and mathematics.
- A range of systems is in place to manage the performance of teachers and to track the progress that pupils are making. While these have been successful in making sure that almost all pupils make expected progress, leaders have not ensured that all teachers focus relentlessly on securing strong progress from all groups of pupils.
- The headteacher and governors have not rigorously reviewed the impact of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils. While the funding is making a difference and enabling some pupils to catch up quickly from low starting points, for example in early years, the lack of robust evaluation means that leaders cannot be certain that funding is being used to best effect.
- The headteacher and governing body have taken action to strengthen the middle leadership since the previous inspection. Subject leaders in English and mathematics take a prominent role in observing teaching, reviewing pupils' work in books and providing advice and guidance to staff. This has led to improvements in some aspects of teachers' practice, such as the quality of marking and feedback to pupils.
- Leadership of the early years is a strength of the school. Leaders have an accurate and realistic view of the starting points of children. They have used this information well to ensure that teaching meets children's needs. More children are now making rapid progress to reach the expected level for their age at the end of Reception class.
- Leaders have demonstrated tenacity in addressing pupils' absence. Close monitoring of pupils' attendance and individual work with families has led to a significant reduction in absence and persistent absenteeism. Pupils' attendance is now in line with the national average.
- Leaders take effective action to intervene where pupils are failing to make expected progress. Personalised programmes of work enable pupils to get back on track. Parents are highly positive about the additional support provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to ensure that they can access the curriculum.
- Leaders monitor the behaviour of pupils closely. The school's system to encourage good behaviour is valued by pupils and staff and all are keenly aware of the consequences of misbehaviour. As a result, incidents of disruptive behaviour are rare.
- The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and engages pupils. The academic curriculum enables pupils to make at least expected progress in all subjects. Pupils particularly enjoy the practical activities they do in science lessons and their work on

iPads and computers. Leaders make sure that pupils experience a range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities to develop their cultural awareness. Equality of access for pupils is ensured through the remittance of charges. Additional government funding has been used well to increase pupils' participation in sporting activity and this is closely tracked to ensure that different groups of pupils have equal access to opportunities. Leaders have been particularly effective in ensuring that the curriculum helps pupils to understand the range of religions and cultures that make up Britain today. As a result, pupils articulate and demonstrate a mature respect and tolerance for others.

- The headteacher is well respected by staff, governors, parents and pupils. She is regarded as approachable; and parents and pupils alike are confident that she will quickly help them with any problems or concerns they have.

Governance of the school

- Governors have supported the headteacher to eradicate some weak teaching and leadership in the school. They have a clear understanding of the current strengths in teaching, because they attend the school regularly to talk to pupils and staff, to look at pupils' books and visit lessons.
- While governors have correctly identified an improving picture in the school, they have not recognised the teaching which is not yet enabling pupils to consistently make good progress. Governors do not have the skills they need to interrogate the information on pupils' progress presented to them by senior leaders. As a result, they have not challenged the headteacher and other staff to improve teaching quickly enough.
- Governors are well informed about the way that pupil premium funding has been spent. However, they have not demanded that leaders undertake a robust evaluation of this spending to ensure it is being used well. They have failed to ensure that they comply with statutory guidance on reporting this information on the school's website.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher leads the way in establishing high expectations for safeguarding practice in the school. She is relentless in following up any concerns about pupils and is not afraid to challenge families or external agencies when she believes a child may be at risk. She has ensured that appropriate employment checks are in place for all adults and that the safeguarding policy is reviewed and updated regularly.
- Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They have all read the most recent guidance on 'Keeping children safe in education'. They are proactive in seeking opportunities to extend their professional knowledge, through accessing training on issues such as female genital mutilation.
- The appointment of a family liaison worker in the past year has strengthened the school's capacity to act quickly to support children and their families where they need help. This has resulted in some very positive examples where potential barriers to learning have been overcome for pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved, but remains variable across the school. In some classes, particularly in early years and in Year 6, teachers use their assessment

information to help them to plan work that is well matched to the needs of pupils. They expect pupils to work hard throughout the lesson. In these classes, pupils make rapid progress. However, in some classes, teachers sometimes provide work which is too easy for the most able pupils or too difficult for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of how well pupils concentrate on their work. This inconsistency has resulted in some pupils making no better than expected progress over time.

- Teachers use a systematic approach to teaching phonics which has resulted in an improvement in the proportions of pupils reaching the expected level in the national check in Year 1. However, some staff do not have sufficiently good subject knowledge to help pupils to make rapid progress, and they model letter sounds to pupils incorrectly. Some lower-ability pupils are given reading books which include words that they cannot read using their existing phonics knowledge. This is limiting their ability to become confident and fluent readers.
- Due to a legacy of weak teaching in the past, a significant proportion of pupils form letters incorrectly, have untidy handwriting and poor skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Leaders have introduced a new handwriting policy and a range of strategies to address these issues. However, not all teachers are focusing relentlessly enough on tackling these basic skills. While pupils' workbooks show some green shoots of improvement, their skills remain below average for their age.
- Leaders have recognised that they need to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics, so that more pupils make rapid progress to reach and exceed the expected levels for their age. They have correctly identified that pupils require greater opportunities to solve problems, to apply the skills they have mastered, and to articulate their mathematical reasoning. Work has begun on this, although it is too early to discern the impact.
- Teachers now expect pupils to write more frequently and for a range of different purposes and this has helped pupils to make better progress in writing.
- Teachers have improved the quality of their written feedback to pupils, in line with the school's revised policy. Pupils are very enthusiastic about this and recognise the positive impact it has had on their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Discussions with pupils demonstrate that they have mature and tolerant attitudes towards others with different beliefs, backgrounds and views. One pupil commented, 'We're all different, but we're all British. Nobody is more important than anyone else.'
- Pupils understand different types of bullying, including name-calling, racist bullying and physical bullying. They are clear about the difference between 'falling out' with their friends and bullying. Discussions with pupils and the school's records confirm that incidences of bullying are extremely rare.
- Older pupils talk confidently about keeping themselves safe online and know who to go to if they are worried. They understand how privacy settings can help to keep their personal information safe online and recognise the filters that are in place in school to protect them from accessing inappropriate websites. Some younger children are less

confident about the actions they should take to ensure they are safe when using the internet.

- Leaders have piloted a new teaching approach to develop pupils' attitudes to learning. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils showed maturity and ambition in selecting their work from a range of options. All pupils chose work which was appropriately challenging for them and were quick to point out to the inspector that there would be little point in doing 'easy work' which wouldn't help them to succeed. Leaders have plans to extend the pilot into other year groups.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well-mannered, show courtesy to visitors and respect to each other. Pupils themselves identified 'kindness to others' as a key strength of their school.
- Pupils behave well around the school, in corridors, the dining hall, in assembly and at playtimes. Very occasionally, the boisterous play of some pupils outside can unsettle others. Pupils are confident that, when this occurs, staff will quickly sort it out.
- Pupils generally behave well in class and comply with instructions from adults. They are clear about the rewards for good behaviour and the potential consequences of behaving inappropriately. In classes where teaching is strongest, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. However, when teaching does not challenge pupils to work hard at the correct level, pupils occasionally lose focus and concentration.
- Staff are rigorous in following up absences and finding ways to address barriers to good attendance. Pupils understand the importance of coming to school and their attendance has improved significantly, and is in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The proportion of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils who reached the expected standard in reading and mathematics in 2016 was below the national average.
- The school's assessment information indicates that, across key stages 1 and 2 in 2015/16, most pupils made expected progress from their starting points in reading and mathematics. However, in some year groups, because teaching is not good enough, very few pupils are making the better than expected progress which is needed to help them to catch up from low starting points or to reach higher levels of attainment. As a result, standards remain low across the school and very few pupils are working above the level expected for their age.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 has improved over the past two years, but remains below the national average.
- While work is not always set at a level which best meets their needs, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make expected progress across the school. This is due to the help they receive from teaching assistants and additional support which they receive outside the classroom.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is inconsistent across the school. In early years and in the Year 1 phonics check, disadvantaged pupils now make more rapid progress than in previous years and a higher proportion of pupils reached the expected levels in 2016. This is partly due to carefully targeted additional support from

classroom assistants and specialist teaching programmes which has helped to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, in some year groups in key stages 1 and 2, disadvantaged pupils make no better than expected progress and, consequently, differences are not consistently diminishing between their attainment and that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

- Progress in writing has improved across key stages 1 and 2. As a result, more pupils at the end of Year 2 reached the expected level for their age in writing in 2016. Although still below national expectations, standards of writing in pupils' workbooks are showing improvement by the end of Year 6.

Early years provision

Good

- The proportion of children reaching the expected level of development at the end of the early years is improving year on year and was close to average in 2016. Children make good progress from their different starting points. The proportion of children ready to access the Year 1 curriculum is increasing.
- Children settle extremely quickly into Nursery because of the good relationships between staff and families. Parents feel confident to approach the school and share any concerns. One parent explained that she had worried about her child starting school because of his August birthday and being the youngest in the class. Staff worked hard to understand his needs and reassured his family, ensuring that he made a smooth start to his school career.
- Staff accurately assess children's starting points and use this information to plan activities which meet children's needs, but also which engage their interest. As a result, they make good progress in all areas of the curriculum and demonstrate huge enthusiasm for their learning. Children take pride in their work. During the inspection, children were excited to have their photograph taken with their own individual interpretation of 'leaf man', a character from a story they had read.
- Children cooperate well with adults and with their peers. They share resources well in learning activities and are keen to work in a team. The learning environment both indoors and outdoors is captivating and provides a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their own play, as well as accessing activities which adults have set for them. This is enabling children to develop their independence and creativity, and ensuring that they make good progress across the curriculum and in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The strong safeguarding practice in place across the whole school is evident in the early years. Staff are diligent in recording and sharing any concerns and the early years welfare requirements are in place.
- Leaders have made good use of pupil premium funding to provide specialist training for staff to meet the needs of disadvantaged children. Staff provide immediate support for those children who have weaker language and communication skills when they join the school. This rapid action has resulted in a steadily increasing proportion of disadvantaged children reaching the expected level for their age at the end of Reception class.
- Staff in early years are uncompromising in their determination to support children to catch up to nationally expected levels from low starting points. This has contributed to the improving outcomes at the end of early years. However, the proportion of children

reaching higher levels of attainment at the end of Reception class is low, particularly for disadvantaged children.

School details

Unique reference number	108330
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10019726

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Bush
Headteacher	Margaret Liddle
Telephone number	0191 4875628
Website	www.larkspurprimary.org
Email address	larkspurcommunityprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its pupil premium strategy on its website.
- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- Children attend part time in Nursery and full time in Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons and also made some shorter visits to classrooms. The headteacher observed a lesson jointly with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons and around the school and held formal meetings with pupils, including some of the most able pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and class teachers. In addition to this, inspectors met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, school improvement planning and documents monitoring pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also reviewed the school's policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents during the inspection through discussions with parents at the start of the school day and in a 'stay and play' session in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Inspection team

Claire Brown, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Dawson	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016