

The Echelford Primary School

Park Road, Ashford, Surrey TW15 1EX

Inspection dates

1–2 November 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have successfully improved the school from a low starting point.
- High importance is placed on developing leadership at every level. Subject leadership is increasingly well developed, enabling continuous improvement in teaching across the curriculum.
- Highly effective use is made of pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and typically achieve as well as other pupils nationally.
- Leaders engage effectively with parents to support pupils' development and improve behaviour and attendance.
- The new assessment system gives leaders a clear understanding of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. However, information about pupils' progress is a little inaccurate and assessment in other subjects is not fully developed.
- Teaching provides suitable challenge for pupils of varying abilities. As a result, pupils, including the most able, make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils understand what they are trying to achieve, and effective assessment and feedback enable them to reflect and improve.
- Behaviour has improved markedly. Pupils typically behave well in lessons. Conduct around the school site is calm and orderly.
- A small number of pupils do not pay enough attention during class discussion and at times there is a sense of restlessness.
- Pupils learn to respect others regardless of differences. Discriminatory behaviour is rare. Less positively, a few pupils bother others with unkind or irritating behaviour.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils are kept safe and feel safe at school.
- Children benefit from a stimulating environment and skilled teaching in Reception and are prepared well for Year 1.
- The trust and governors have made good use of external support and challenge to ensure leaders' accountability for improving the school. However, they and leaders do not maintain a truly incisive understanding of the school's performance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing strengths in teaching to raise it to outstanding, ensuring that pupils are consistently instilled with the exemplary learning habits necessary to make really strong progress.
- Ensure that incidents of unkindness and inconsiderate behaviour become increasingly rare.
- Further develop the way pupils' progress is assessed and evaluated, so that leaders and governors have an incisive understanding of pupils' achievement in all subjects.
- Ensure that routinely sharp use is made of information about the school's performance so that leaders and governors have an acute insight into the school's effectiveness and the impact of actions to improve the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have worked with determination and resilience, successfully improving this school from a low starting point. Behaviour has improved dramatically and teaching is increasingly strong.
- Leaders' work to develop teaching is effective. They make good use of the information they collect about teaching to gain insight into teachers' individual strengths and weaknesses and provide effective training and support which enable improvement.
- Leaders make highly effective use of pupil premium funding to improve disadvantaged pupils' achievement and tend to their broader development. Some funding is put towards the cost of employing a small team of pastoral staff who provide effective support for these pupils. The home-school link worker helps engage parents in their children's education and secure good attendance. Individual support sessions help disadvantaged pupils who are behind to catch up. Improved teaching resources for mathematics and English have helped improve teaching and home learning. Funded places in school clubs have increased the participation of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve well and are able to fully engage in wider life at the school.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and others who need extra support is strong. High importance is placed on ensuring that teaching in class meets the needs of these pupils. Teachers and support staff are trained and equipped with suitable strategies to achieve this. Further appropriate training is provided to help staff support pupils with specific needs. For example, a specialist from the local authority language and learning service helps identify specific barriers that some pupils have to learning. She advises staff on the most suitable support for these pupils. Individualised support, such as extra phonics sessions, effectively supplements teaching in class. Pupils who need support to develop social skills and emotional resilience benefit from time spent at The Meadow nurture group. Consequently, pupils engage in lessons and typically learn well. Leaders keep increasingly robust records of pupils' needs and the impact of teaching and support. They identify what is and is not working well and adjust their approach when needed.
- Senior leaders have placed a high priority on developing subject leadership. Subject leaders are well supported and undertake suitable training, including nationally recognised leadership qualifications. Attendance at subject meetings with other schools in the consortium helps to ensure that they are well versed in the subjects they are responsible for. Subject leaders increasingly take full responsibility for checking the quality of teaching in their subject and planning for and leading improvements. As a result, pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that supports effective learning. However these leaders do not have a consistently incisive understanding of the impact of their work and recognise that this is a key next step.
- Leaders have worked effectively to tackle poor behaviour. The introduction of the 'stay on green' system motivates the vast majority of pupils to behave well. Previous unruly behaviour as pupils entered the school and moved between lessons has been eliminated. The strict routine of lining up and walking silently behind the teacher has

ensured an orderly and calm conduct at movement times. Leaders regularly review behaviour incidents with the parents, pupils and teachers to identify where pupils need further support. These discussions and the resulting extra support have contributed significantly to reductions in challenging behaviour. Pupils previously exhibiting poor behaviour have increasingly learned to behave well.

- Leaders make good use of the physical education and sport premium. The money is primarily spent on a sports premium mentor who is employed by the academy trust. The mentor provides subject expertise and support to staff to develop skills and confidence in teaching physical education. The mentor also runs specialist sessions for pupils displaying talent. Additionally, money is suitably spent on increasing the range of sports opportunities available. As a result, the quality of teaching is now good and pupils' participation in sport has increased.
- As well as a variety of sports activities, including football, netball, athletics, badminton and gymnastics, pupils also have access to a range of other clubs, including dance, art and craft and history clubs. There is something on offer each day. Pupils also value opportunities for educational visits to such places as the Isle of Wight and a specialist outdoor adventure centre and spoke excitedly about their forthcoming visits.
- On becoming an academy, trust leaders sensibly decided to continue receiving support from Babcock Education which runs school improvement services for the local authority. A consultant has provided helpful challenge and support to leaders, verifying evaluations of teaching quality and helping them identify and tackle areas for improvement.
- Leaders have worked together with pupils, parents and staff to establish the school's values of 'equality, law, tolerance, respect and democracy'. Assemblies, personal, social and health education and religious education cover issues related to these. Pupils know the importance of respect for all regardless of difference. However, their understanding of law and democracy is less well developed.
- Leaders have established a suitable approach to assessing pupils' achievement in English and mathematics in line with new requirements. Teachers regularly enter information into the electronic system about pupils' most recent achievement in English and mathematics. This enables leaders to gain an accurate view of the attainment of all groups of pupils in the school. However, the reports leaders regularly extract from the system about pupils' progress are not so helpful. The system calculates pupils' progress based on the amount of new learning acquired in all aspects of the subject, even when only some aspects have been covered since the previous report. As a result, the reports indicate that pupils' progress is weaker than it actually is.
- Assessment in other subjects is in development. Teachers intend to record pupils' achievement in science and foundation subjects on the electronic system for the first time this term. Until this approach is fully established, leaders cannot gain a sharp insight into pupils' achievement across subjects.
- Leaders' self-evaluation and development planning are a relative weakness. Leaders have a sound working knowledge of the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour. School self-evaluation is broadly accurate and improvement plans typically identify suitable areas for attention. However, leaders do not always pay enough attention to the precise impact their work has when they evaluate their effectiveness. The exact starting points for improvement work and the expected impact by key points in time

are often not sharply defined. Improvement aims are not routinely precise. For example, the key priority for improving outcomes is defined in the school's most recent self-evaluation document as a 'whole school focus on writing and more able writers'. Exactly what needs to improve and what the current situation is are not defined. Consequently, leaders, the local governing board and the trust board do not have a really incisive understanding of the school's effectiveness or how quickly it is improving.

Governance of the school

- Members of the trust and local governing board get involved in the life of the school and know it well. Regular meetings with school leaders, attendance at external review meetings, visits to the school and attendance at school events all help to assure them that the school is improving. However, although they know that the school has improved significantly, they do not have a precise understanding of the school's performance. For example, governors know that behaviour has improved dramatically over the last three years but do not consider by how much incidents of poor behaviour or low-level disruption have decreased over time. Similarly, they know what the school does to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and to develop respect and tolerance, but do not have an incisive understanding of the impact of this work. They are not well placed to hold leaders sharply to account for improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on the suitability of staff are sound. Staff receive suitable, regular training. They know what to do if they have any concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Leaders are tenacious in the way they support and monitor pupils who are deemed to be at risk of harm. Leaders act swiftly to provide support for such pupils, bringing in outside agencies when needed. Decisions about when to refer pupils to the local authority for further support are grounded in a sophisticated understanding of local child protection arrangements and the different levels of risk pupils face.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe in the school environment and on educational visits. Risks that different activities may present are identified and staff are clear about the measures they must take to minimise risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers forge positive relationships with pupils and plan and teach engaging lessons that support good progress. Pupils remarked on their 'really nice' teachers and how they enjoy learning because the subjects they study are interesting.
- Teachers know their pupils well. Typically, they make sure that pupils with lower starting points get the support needed to grasp the task and the most able are suitably stretched.
- Teaching helps pupils understand the learning expected of them. Pupils learn to reflect on their work and identify where they need to improve. Teachers' effective verbal and written feedback together with pupils' own assessment are pivotal in enabling strong progress.
- Phonics is taught well and supports pupils to become successful readers. Lower-ability pupils are equipped with strategies for tackling tricky words and read at least once a

day and at home. These pupils enjoy reading and said that the extra support they receive outside of class is helping them improve.

- Teaching in mathematics is effective. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to tackle open-ended tasks which prompt them to think and apply their mathematical knowledge, thereby deepening their understanding.
- Teaching of writing enables pupils to tackle a suitable range of writing styles and genres in English lessons and in other subjects. Pupils learn to think about and plan their writing before tackling their final piece. Pupils are able to select from a range of helpful resources such as menus of different grammatical devices to support their planning. Interesting stimuli help them write creatively and descriptively. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils watched images and listened to sounds of a rainforest as they thought about how they could engage the reader's interest in a story set in one. Teaching encourages pupils to review and edit their own writing and they become increasingly confident in this as they get older.
- Subject leaders provide teachers with helpful plans for teaching which define the expectations for what pupils should be learning in each aspect of each subject in each year. This enables teachers to plan teaching that supports good progress in science and most foundation subjects as well as English and mathematics.
- Although teaching is typically good, some inconsistency remains. Some teachers do not consistently make the best use of lesson time, for example requiring the most able pupils to spend time engaging in a quite basic discussion rather than tackling work that helps them really deepen their learning. Additionally, teaching in a small number of subjects, and music in particular, needs further attention to ensure that pupils' subject skills and knowledge are consistently well developed.
- Pupils in key stage 1 display consistently strong attitudes to learning. Pupils in key stage 2 are also keen to learn and, when tackling their own work, almost all make a good effort. Learning is not usually slowed by off-task behaviour. However, when teachers are holding discussions with the whole class, a few pupils tend to switch off, fidget or sit incorrectly or on occasion talk quietly while the teacher is talking. Although typically teachers manage class behaviour well, not all teachers are insistent enough on high levels of behaviour at all times. As a result, there is a sense of restlessness in parts of some lessons which can reduce pupils' opportunity to experience deep, engaging discussions that support outstanding progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They are confident that teachers will deal with any concern. They value the introduction of class worry boxes which enable them to raise issues they may not be comfortable to talk directly to an adult about.
- Pupils learn to stay safe on the internet and in the wider world. Pupils know to not reveal their identity to others and the potential risks when online. Pupils value sessions on swimming and cycling safety. Year 6 pupils talked of their memorable 'junior citizen' visit to the local fire station in Year 5, where they had learned about fire and road

safety and keeping safe when using public transport. Pupils are well prepared to become increasingly independent as they get older.

- Pupils enjoy the wealth of opportunities to play at break and lunchtime in the well-supervised play areas. Good use is made of the adventure equipment. Lunch is an orderly affair where the pupils can choose from a range of healthy hot and cold options. Adults gently encourage the younger pupils to try out different food.
- Pupils are positive about work to promote the school's values. They learn to respect other pupils' backgrounds and are clear that discrimination is not tolerated. Incidents of prejudiced behaviour are very rare. Pupils value the weekly 'courtesy theme' introduced this term, which highlights ways in which pupils can display polite and considerate behaviour, such as holding the door open for others.
- Leaders make sure that the very few pupils attending alternative provision attend well, are kept safe and are supported in their development.
- Some pupils and parents said that bullying is an issue, yet leaders only have records of two incidents of bullying in the last year. Inspection evidence indicates that what some describe as bullying is, in fact, a few pupils annoying others with silly or irritating attention-seeking behaviour. Nevertheless, this is an area for further work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school site. Most behave in an exemplary manner. They show enthusiasm for learning and pride in their work. Pupils are friendly and polite to staff and visitors. At break and lunchtime, conduct is calm and orderly. At the end of lunch, pupils line up quickly in silence and follow their teacher sensibly into class. This leads to a calm start to the next lesson.
- Attendance has improved. Telephone contact with families, as well as unannounced home visits and support to escort some pupils who are anxious to school, have all contributed. As a result, the proportion of girls, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs with poor attendance has reduced.
- Pupils said that behaviour has improved considerably; parents and staff agree. Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced dramatically. There has been a sharp decline in the number of fixed-term exclusions and the number of pupils excluded more than once. Incidents of a less serious nature have also reduced term-on-term.
- Most pupils behave extremely well. Nevertheless, some boys do not pay full attention during class discussion. Additionally, pupils are clear that although there is no prejudice or discriminatory behaviour, some pupils can be unkind or inconsiderate to others. Pupils said that this is typically tackled well by staff when they are aware of it. Nevertheless, some of this behaviour persists.
- Pupils said that although most really value the chance to 'stay on green' and move on to bronze, silver and gold awards, a few pupils are not motivated to behave well by this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils typically make good progress in most subjects including English and mathematics. Progress in key stage 1 is strong. The progress of pupils over time in key stage 2 is a

little more variable, due to a legacy of previous underachievement and some more recent variations in teaching quality. Nevertheless, overall these pupils also achieve well.

- Effective teaching of phonics in Year 1 enables pupils to make a good start in reading. In 2016, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the national phonics screening check was in line with the national figure. Almost all those pupils who did not reach the standard in Year 1 in 2015 reached it the following year in Year 2.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics at key stage 1. Pupils make good use of their phonics skills as they develop into confident readers, and effective teaching of mathematics enables pupils to meet the higher demands of the new mathematics curriculum. Provisional information for 2016 indicates that the proportion reaching the higher standard in reading and mathematics was above that seen nationally.
- Achievement in writing at key stage 1 has improved. In recent years, pupils' attainment in writing at the end of the key stage has been lower than in reading and mathematics and the proportion reaching the higher level in writing has been low. Despite more challenging end of key stage assessments in 2016, provisional national information shows that more than the average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard and the proportion reaching a high standard was average. Pupils currently in key stage 1 write increasingly confidently.
- Pupils currently in key stage 2 typically make good progress in English and mathematics. Over the last year as teaching has continued to improve, progress has become more consistently strong, although some variation remains between subjects and classes. Teaching had not previously been strong enough to consistently tackle pupils' prior underachievement and fully meet the higher demands of the new national tests. Provisional information for 2016 indicates that, on average, pupils' progress in mathematics and writing by the end of key stage 2 was low. As a result of increasingly effective teaching, pupils currently in Year 6 are better placed to achieve well in the tests next summer than their predecessors.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress as a result of effective teaching coupled with individualised support. Provisional information for 2016 shows that by the end of each key stage these pupils had made good progress and attained broadly in line with other pupils nationally. Notably, disadvantaged pupils' attainment in writing exceeded that of others nationally at key stage 2.
- The most able pupils typically make good progress, because teaching engages them in suitably stretching tasks. Nevertheless, leaders have rightly identified promotion of even higher achievement for this group as a priority. Additionally, some of the most able disadvantaged pupils inspectors met, despite being competent readers, were not enthused by reading and saw it as a 'bit of a chore'.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points. Provisional information for 2016 indicates that a high proportion met the expected standard in the national phonics screening test and that such pupils made good progress by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and others who need extra support typically make good progress because staff know the needs of these pupils well. They ensure that these pupils are set work at a suitable level of challenge and supported to get to grips with it.

- Pupils' achievement in most subjects is good. However, leaders recognise that in a few subjects teaching does not consistently provide the differing levels of challenge needed for all groups to make good progress. Music in particular needs attention.

Early years provision

Good

- Provision in the early years has improved considerably and is increasingly effective. Children benefit from a stimulating, well-resourced and attractive environment indoors and out. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming. Children make good progress from their starting points and leave well equipped for Year 1.
- Teachers plan a range of interesting opportunities that enable children to learn well and initiate their own learning. Staff questioning helps children to learn and think more deeply. For example, when working with a group constructing a large structure, the teacher asked, 'What are we going to put there?' and 'Is that safe?' Children working out the order of a story were asked, 'What do you think happened?' and 'What happened next?' to develop their understanding of the story and time.
- Children make increasingly good progress from their starting points. The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development has increased notably since 2014 and in 2016 was above the national average. In most areas of development, a high proportion of children reached the expected level. However, the proportion reaching the expected level in writing was relatively low. Leaders are tackling this. Phonics sessions now include better opportunities to write. Extra support sessions have been introduced for those who find writing difficult. The most able have opportunities to write with pupils in Year 1. All these approaches are helping to ensure that children in Reception this year make stronger progress from their starting points in writing than in previous years.
- Staff manage children's behaviour very effectively. The warm manner in which staff engage with children encourages good behaviour. Expectations and routines are well established. For example, during a short session developing physical skills, children responded quickly to a musical cue to stop and start each exercise. Children are attentive to staff instructions and behave sensibly as they explore and learn.
- Leaders have suitably high expectations for individual children's achievement. Robust assessment and tracking help them to make sure that children are on course to reach these expectations. Leaders make suitable use of pupil premium funding to employ an extra teaching assistant who supports disadvantaged pupils to make good progress.
- Staff establish effective communication with parents and children from the start. Home visits along with taster sessions and information evenings establish positive relationships. Staff gain insight into children's starting points and put them at ease. One parent commented, 'My son met his teacher three times before he even started ... what could have been a daunting experience was completely the opposite.' Leaders also work well in partnership with other settings, for example visiting pre-schools to find out more about the children's starting points.
- Leaders have made sure that children are kept safe indoors and outside. Staff carry out daily checks on all aspects of the provision that can present a risk. Anything that requires attention is referred to the site manager who deals with it.

School details

Unique reference number	140034
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10019845

This inspection of the school 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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	577
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark George
Headteacher	Sarah Vernon
Telephone number	01784 253233
Website	www.echelfordprimary.co.uk/
Email address	office@lumenlearningtrust.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average primary school. The majority of pupils are White British. A larger than average proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest of these groups being from Other White backgrounds and Indian backgrounds. A similar proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is a little below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national figure, and the proportion with an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

- The school became a sponsored academy in October 2013, joining the Lumen Learning Trust. When the school was inspected prior to this in November 2012, it was judged as having serious weaknesses.
- The executive principal of the trust, Mary Ellen McCarthy, is a national leader of education. This term, she has taken on the role of headteacher of the school while the substantive headteacher is on long-term sick leave.
- The school is a member of a consortium of 25 local schools, the Spelthorne Schools Together confederation.
- The school has been receiving regular support and challenge from a consultant from Babcock Education, which runs school improvement services for Surrey.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision either part time at The Meadow nurture group at Spelthorne School or full time at Fordway Centre Pupil Referral Unit.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons, nine jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work from a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, including the executive principal and the substantive headteacher. She came in to the school for the inspection at her own request and with the agreement of the trust. Discussions were also held with the director of the trust, the chair of the local governing board, teachers, pupils and parents. The lead inspector met with a representative from Babcock Education and a senior local authority officer.
- The inspectors reviewed documents, including safeguarding policies, behaviour and attendance records, self-evaluation and planning documents and the school's records on performance management and teaching and learning.
- Account was taken of 27 staff survey responses and 86 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors considered 45 parent responses by free text.

Inspection team

Diana Choulerton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Dunmall	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Crompton	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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