

Lea Forest Primary Academy

Hurstcroft Road, Kitts Green, Birmingham B33 9RD

Inspection dates

8–9 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school has improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good. Attendance has improved well. Pupils in all key stages and subjects are now making good progress and, as a result, standards are rising.
- The headteacher, her deputy and senior leadership team provide highly effective and inspiring leadership.
- Leaders and governors share an ambitious culture of high standards and want the very best for the pupils.
- Governors play a key role in improving the work of the school. They are effective in holding senior leaders to account.
- Pupils, staff, parents and governors sing the praises of this very inclusive school. The family and inclusion team performs a crucial role in supporting pupils and families.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive a good level of support and make good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. Younger pupils now make good progress in phonics. In key stage 2, however, these improvements in reading are less evident.
- Sometimes, in reading, the work provided for the most able and low attaining pupils does not challenge them to deepen their skills and reach higher standards. Pupils' love of reading is not yet widespread.
- Pupils use a consistent handwriting style across the school. Pupils' books are very well presented and they take pride in their work.
- The curriculum provides rich learning for all pupils. It is broad and balanced and makes relevant links between subjects.
- The school's approaches to assessing pupils' skills remain inconsistent. Some planned tasks do not enable pupils to build well on what they already know and can do.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are polite, respectful and friendly.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. They feel safe and happy and are well looked after.
- Children in the early years receive a good quality start to their education. They are happy and settled, and make good progress.
- Leaders' plans for improving the school even further lack some precision. Plans lack clear targets and milestones. This makes it difficult for leaders to monitor school development fully effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the work provided for the most able and low attaining pupils in reading stretches their abilities and deepens their skills so that they make better progress and reach higher standards and ensure that a widespread love of reading is fostered across the school.
- Ensure that approaches to assessing pupils' skills are consistent so that planned tasks build well on what the pupils have already achieved.
- Ensure that the school's improvement plans contain clear targets and milestones that enable leaders to monitor school development fully effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide highly effective and inspiring leadership. Leaders and governors have created an ambitious culture of high expectations. The school motto is 'making our best better'. Relationships are very positive across the whole-school community.
- Together, leaders, governors and the academy trust have successfully improved the quality of education since the last inspection. Teaching has strengthened, attendance has improved and pupils' progress has accelerated so that pupils now achieve well in all key stages.
- Successful arrangements to manage the performance of staff have helped to improve teaching and outcomes for pupils. Staff say that they are well supported to improve their skills and professional expertise. They value the training and coaching they receive and say that the feedback they get from monitoring helps them to improve their teaching practice.
- Teachers benefit from opportunities to work alongside one another and to share practice with staff from other academies within the trust. However, leaders are yet to ensure that teachers' approaches to assessing pupils' skills are consistently well applied.
- As a result of strong guidance from senior leaders, middle leaders are becoming increasingly effective in their roles. They are now better equipped with the skills needed to check the school's work effectively.
- The school improvement plan is based on leaders' accurate evaluation of the school's performance. Nevertheless, plans for further improvement lack some precision. They do not contain the clear targets and milestones that would enable leaders to monitor school development fully effectively.
- The inclusion leader is very proactive in addressing the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is good evidence that their work with other agencies ensures that pupils' additional needs are met.
- Communication with parents is very good and pupils are well supported in their transition to other schools. The pastoral manager plays a very active role in supporting vulnerable pupils. Parents are very appreciative of the support provided.
- The curriculum is well planned to stimulate pupils, based on their needs. Appropriate links are made to the various subjects taught to ensure that pupils' English and mathematical skills are developed across the curriculum. By learning through various topics and tasks, pupils are able to develop skills, such as thinking creatively and showing innovation. Pupils' learning is further enhanced through trips and visits, such as to a local science museum.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is threaded through the curriculum and underpins the school's values. British values are taught well. For example, pupils have developed their understanding of democracy by watching videos relating to the election of a new American president. Pupils listened to the views of young people about the candidates and their manifestos and used the information collated to prepare a

newspaper account.

- The pupil premium is used well to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils from their starting points. Their progress is tracked and monitored carefully. Pupils are provided with timely and effective support to ensure that they make good progress. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are helped and encouraged to participate fully in what the school has to offer.
- The primary school sports and physical education (PE) funding is used effectively to provide more opportunities for pupils to take part in sport within the school day and after school. It has also been spent on training, resourcing and facilitating participation in local sports events. Funding has significantly improved the PE and sports skills of pupils and their attitudes to the subject.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Through regular visits and meetings, management board members have a good working knowledge of school life and its strengths and weaknesses.
- The Academies Enterprise Trust ensures that any new members have skills that can support the school. The skills of new members of the management board have been instrumental in moving the school successfully forward.
- The trust has commissioned reviews from external agencies. Reviews have been effective and have brought about improvements.
- Members are well informed as a result of regular reports of assessment data and outcomes of actions taken by leaders to raise standards. Individual board members are linked to specific areas, such as safeguarding, special educational needs and early years. Their visits to the school evaluate how well the school is putting intended actions and policies into practice.
- Documentation shows that members challenge leaders and are extremely proactive in holding leaders to account. They provide rigour and support to develop staff. Members access external support where it is needed. This has made a positive difference to the effectiveness of leadership and to the quality of teaching.
- The board members have faith in school leaders to hold the staff to account and to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes continue to improve.
- The management board is moving towards a local governing body model in order to widen and strengthen community representation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The strong pastoral care of the pupils is reflective of a culture of care and safety for all pupils. Within the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Staff have received all the required training and know what to do if they have concerns.
- Procedures for dealing with children who are missing from school are robust.
- The school works well to identify anyone who may be at risk of harm. Concerns are

reported promptly. Support is tailored well and the school works well with agencies to safeguard pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Senior leaders have made it a priority to rigorously check the quality of teaching and provide challenge and support to carry out improvements needed. Strong action has been taken to address weak teaching. New staff are supported well. Teachers value these arrangements. They know what is working well and what they need to do to improve.
- Leaders have recently introduced a revised approach to planning and delivering lessons, including providing clearer guidance on what pupils need to achieve. Pupils now have a better understanding about what they are learning. They work well with each other in groups, supporting each other to make progress and address errors.
- Teachers place much importance on modelling handwriting so that the presentation of pupils' work in their books is of a high standard. Pupils show a good level of care and pride in their achievements. Pupils' books reflect the good progress they make.
- Teachers consistently follow the whole-school marking policy. They mark pupils' work regularly and suggest areas for improvement. As a result, pupils know when they have made progress and when they need to catch up. Pupils told inspectors that feedback from teachers is honest and tells them what they need to learn next.
- Classrooms are well equipped and laid out to support effective learning. Pupils make good use of the displays on walls, which provide a key focus for learning. These include numeracy and literacy prompts and examples of pupils' successful work.
- Approaches to assessing what pupils already know and can do are inconsistent across the school. As a result, some planned tasks do not always enable pupils to build well on what they have already achieved.
- The teaching of phonics has improved significantly. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and use a scheme that delivers a consistent approach that pupils can relate to. Younger pupils now make good progress in phonics and attain well. However, this has not yet been fully transferred into reading further up the school. The reading skills of the most able and low attaining pupils are not always developed enough for them to attain at a level they are capable of. Pupils' love of reading is not widespread.
- Teachers plan and teach lessons that engage pupils' interests. As a result, the pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In mathematics, pupils are provided with opportunities to solve problems and develop their reasoning skills. In English, pupils' writing skills are enhanced through participating in a range of group and individual activities based on texts that stimulate them. Throughout the school, there is a strong focus on strategies to develop language and vocabulary and these further support pupils' writing skills.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively. Teaching assistants are well prepared for their roles, supporting pupils of all abilities. As a result of training, teaching assistants now offer effective support and successfully encourage pupils' independence.
- Homework is given regularly. Pupils say that homework helps them improve, providing

extra work to challenge them and to practise what they know.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say they 'feel good' about themselves in school. Pupils are confident and display positive self-esteem. This is as a result of the pastoral guidance and support offered both for their personal development and academic achievements. Parents who met inspectors spoke very positively about the care and guidance pupils receive and how well they are looked after.
- Pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They hold doors open for everyone and exercise self-control and care. Pupils show respect for each other and one another's ideas. There are many opportunities for pupils to debate, ask questions and challenge one another. The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and an understanding of religions. 'We all get on well; we are a multicultural school.' reflects a typical comment from pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They talk about ways in which they can stay safe, including when they are online. They know about different forms of bullying and they say that instances of bullying are rare.
- Assemblies are used as a driver for messages of safety, for example on bonfire night. These messages are followed up in class; for example, making posters about the dangers of fireworks.
- Pupils are aware of the school's systems and procedures to keep themselves safe; for example, signing in at breakfast club so they are all accounted for.
- The school's values of high aspirations, resilience, respect, innovation, and independence are embedded throughout all areas of the school and are referred to at many times of the day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enter the school in the morning in a calm, orderly manner, often accompanied by parents who leave them in the playground. Parents say that behaviour is good and that if they have any concerns they are quickly followed up.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct in class and at break and lunchtimes is good. Pupils display self-discipline. A clear behaviour policy sets out the consequences of poor behaviour along with pupils' roles and responsibilities. A range of rewards promote positive behaviour, for example 'table points' and the 'sitting smartly club' in assembly.
- Disruption in class and around the school is rare. Pupils respond quickly to instructions, enabling lessons to flow smoothly. Skilled pastoral care is provided for pupils with particular behavioural needs. Behaviour is closely monitored and appropriate actions are taken where necessary.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average. The daily breakfast club, attended by over 130 pupils, helps to ensure that

pupils are punctual and ready to learn. The pastoral manager and inclusion team have worked well with families whose children are often absent. Pupils are well supported to ensure that they are in school more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection, outcomes have improved and are now good in reading, writing and mathematics in all key stages. As a result of good teaching, the standard of work across the school has risen.
- Published data shows that levels of attainment and rates of progress for pupils at the end of key stage 1 and 2 historically have been below national levels. Pupils' current work, observations of learning, the school's data relating to pupils' progress and pupils' books from last year all confirm that pupils are now making good progress from often low starting points. Achievement is higher in all year groups than previously. Many pupils are now working at levels expected for their age.
- Learning gets off to a good start in the early years. Children are now well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Achievement in reading has improved notably for younger pupils. An above-average proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard in the 2016 reading screening check. This is higher than in previous years. Additional support, such as in Year 3, is helping older pupils to catch up. Even so, while pupils do well in reading overall, too few low-attaining pupils reach the expected levels and not enough of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, reach the higher levels.
- Disadvantaged pupils attain at least as well as, and in some instances outperform, other pupils in school. Effective use of the pupil premium helps to ensure that they make good progress. Although disadvantaged pupils do not yet reach the same standard as other pupils nationally, these differences are diminishing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language are given effective support and, as a result, make good progress.
- Overall, the most able pupils are doing better than previously, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is because expectations have risen and tasks are more challenging – which helps them achieve their potential.
- Displays, pupils' topic books and work show that the majority of pupils are making good progress in subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education.

Early years provision

Good

- A significant proportion of children start in the early years at a level of development below that which is typical for their age. Children's communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills are often low and require the most development when they start school. Children make good progress from their starting points and by the time they leave the Reception Year their skills are in line with national averages.
- Children's progress is tracked closely to identify any who may fall behind. Early

intervention with a targeted focus supports these children daily, ensuring that they make good gains. Assessments of what children know and can do are carefully checked to make sure they are accurate.

- Children are happy and engaged in well-planned tasks in either adult-led sessions or in activities they choose for themselves. Expectations are made clear to them, and, as a result, the children settle well and remain engaged in tasks. Learning provision shows breadth across the entire curriculum. Staff devote a lot of time to developing language and communication skills. For example, children were observed very engaged in developing their vocabulary and language skills, excitedly talking in sentences about the text 'The night shimmy'. They responded well to opportunities to extend each other's answers.
- The use of 'talk' has recently been introduced to support the children in transferring their verbal skills to their writing. Children in Reception were able to retell a story, reciting more advanced vocabulary using a variety of actions, showing clear enjoyment.
- Activities outdoors develop children's physical skills, exploration, creativity and a sense of awe and wonder. Children particularly like discovering different creatures located in the forest outdoors. They can identify similarities and differences.
- Staff are well deployed and have a good understanding of children's needs and how to get the best out of them. They ask skilful questions and encourage precision in language, for example using 'taller' and 'smaller' when exploring the size of objects.
- Phonics is taught very well. Swift intervention is put in place for children who do not grasp any sounds quickly. Children are able to apply their knowledge of sounds when they are reading. This can also be seen in their attempts at spelling in their writing.
- Provision is well led and managed by the early years leader, who has a clear vision and ambition. This is shared with staff and, as a result, staff work very closely as a team. There is an accurate picture of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders have, rightly, identified the need to further challenge boys to make greater progress.
- Children are well behaved and feel safe. They learn respect and celebrate each other's differences through a specific teaching programme. British values are reflected in the school's values. Dinosaur characters, which represent these values, enable children to know the values and begin to understand them.
- Children are kept safe. Welfare and health and safety requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	139003
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10020039

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The management board
Chair	Alan Parkinson
Headteacher	Hilary Thompson
Telephone number	0121 6753985
Website	www.leaforestacademy.org
Email address	contactus@leaforestacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	11–12 November 2014

Information about this school

- 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.
- This is the second inspection of the school since it opened on 1 December 2012. It is one of a chain of academies sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost three quarters of the pupils are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium. This is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national average.

- Just less than half of the pupils are of White British heritage and the school has admitted a large number of new arrivals over the last two years. This has created an extra class in one of the year groups. Some of these pupils have left and others have been admitted, so stability is lower than average.
- The early years is made up of a morning Nursery class and two full-time Reception class.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards and rate of progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics of pupils in key stage 2.
- The school operates a breakfast club, which is managed by the management board.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes and observed learning in 22 lessons. Three lesson observations were conducted jointly, involving the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Pupils' work was reviewed during lessons and a more detailed scrutiny was made of pupils' books with the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. Pupils read to inspectors and inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection in order to gather their views.
- Discussions took place with: the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, four members of the management board that has responsibility for governance of the school, a group of teachers and teaching assistants. Discussions also took place with the regional education adviser and the director of challenge and intervention from the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), which is the academy's sponsor.
- A range of documents was reviewed. These included: the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, performance management documents, minutes of meetings of the management board, the school's own assessment information, and records related to behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of children.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed in lessons, in assembly, at breaktime and at lunchtime as well as when pupils were moving around the building.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) to generate a result. Inspectors took account of the school's survey of parents and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the staff survey that the school had recently carried out.

Inspection team

Lynda Townsend, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Peters	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Davis	Ofsted Inspector

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