

Leverton Primary School

Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3BE

Inspection dates

30 November–1 December 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There have been significant challenges in ensuring that the school continues to improve. The recent extension of the junior school to include early years and key stage 1 has been a distraction to the leadership and there is still some work to do to sustain improvements being made.
- Leadership and management are not yet good. Leaders have not routinely monitored the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, standards are not rising rapidly enough in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors do not challenge leaders enough about pupils' performance. As a result, pupils' achievement is not as good as it should be.
- Checks on pupils' progress are not detailed and precise enough for all pupils. This means that leaders do not always know how well pupils are doing, or who requires support.
- Teaching is not consistent enough to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is weaker than in writing and mathematics. This is because pupils are not taught well enough how to understand what they read, and explain using evidence from the text.
- Many pupils have some gaps in their learning and as a result are not well prepared for the next stages of their education.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years is well led. Children are taught well and as a result, make good progress from their often low starting points.
- Attendance is improving. This is because leaders are taking effective steps to secure better attendance, particularly for pupils who previously had erratic patterns of attendance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management at all levels to accelerate the pace of school improvement, by:
 - regularly checking that actions taken are helping pupils learn more effectively
 - ensuring that the new senior leadership team has a relentless focus on improving pupils' progress and that governors check they are doing this rigorously enough
 - evaluating the assessment systems in place to make sure that there is thorough, accurate evidence that informs leaders about pupils' progress and attainment.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teaching is consistently good and being sustained across the whole school to secure better achievement for all pupils
 - a higher proportion of most able pupils are challenged to achieve the higher standard of which they are capable.
- Improve the teaching of reading so that more pupils make rapid progress, and reach at least the expected standard by the end of Year 6, by ensuring that:
 - any differences in older pupils' reading skills are diminished so that they are able to understand fully what they are reading
 - teachers use their professional judgement to ensure that they plan their teaching activities to meet the needs of pupils
 - teachers' subject knowledge in reading improves so they are better able to identify and address any remaining weaknesses and misconceptions in pupils' literacy skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have been distracted from effectively and rapidly improving the quality of teaching and learning. The work involved in extending the junior school to include early years and key stage 1 has taken up a considerable amount of time and resources. As a result, leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching has not always been rigorous enough to improve standards quickly.
- The new leadership team are enthusiastic and keen to do their best for all pupils. However, they are not yet fully confident in their roles and are still developing their monitoring skills to ensure that the quality of teaching improves. A new assessment system has been introduced, but leaders are not yet using this routinely enough to check pupils' progress. As a consequence, leaders cannot check thoroughly that pupils are attaining the standards they are capable of.
- Leaders have accurately identified the school's priorities in the current school action plans. For example, a recent focus on the effective use of teaching assistants has resulted in improved practice across the school. Teaching assistants are now using effective questioning to support pupils to make better progress.
- Creative, exciting curriculum plans have recently been developed. Events such as 'launch days', visits, and 'fabulous finishes' ensure that pupils access all subject areas equally. They have a wide variety of activities that enthuse and motivate them to want to do well. However, this is new, and the work in pupils' books does not yet fully demonstrate that these experiences are contributing to their achievement in other areas of the curriculum.
- In some cases, the pupil premium funding is well targeted to provide academic support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they now attain closer to national figures for other pupils in writing and mathematics. However, this is not the case for reading, and for the most able disadvantaged pupils. Although achievement information shows differences are diminishing between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally, this is not the case for reading. In addition, the most able disadvantaged pupils are not attaining the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders ensure that the additional primary sports funding is used well. It is providing a good range of activities that motivate pupils to keep fit and active. Pupils say that they enjoy participating in extra-curricular sports clubs and swimming. Over time, the proportion of pupils who can swim at least 25 metres has more than doubled. As a result, more pupils are confident in water and successfully acquire this life skill.
- The school is developing its work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and to provide more opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Older pupils are given the opportunity to discuss democracy, anti-bullying and e-safety. They are encouraged to take responsibility, and enjoy helping the younger pupils around the school. As yet, leaders have not organised similar learning opportunities for younger pupils; however, it is in the school's plans to do so.
- Although parents are largely supportive of the school, there are a few that are concerned about the recent transition to a large primary school and recognise the extra

work this has given leaders. Parents would welcome more regular opportunities to meet with leaders to find out how the primary school is developing and how they can support the work of the school.

- The local authority is providing appropriate support for the school. For example, they are signposting leaders to schools who face similar challenges. This will ensure that practice can be shared, securing the sustained focus on improving the school's provision. Regular local authority visits are helping the school to identify areas to develop to further move the school forward.

Governance of the school

- Following a governance review, governors have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and are now more effective in challenging and supporting leaders. Governors are largely knowledgeable about pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching. They have a clear understanding of performance management procedures to ensure that teachers' pay is linked to performance and they achieve this successfully.
- Although governors do ask some challenging questions, they still rely too heavily on the headteacher to individually evaluate the work of the school, and develop improvement plans. As a result, governors do not play a full role in determining the strategic work of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff and governors receive regular training in safeguarding procedures. Staff are fully trained in child protection, including the risks of extremism and radicalisation. Staff know the school's agreed procedures and follow them thoroughly when they have a concern about a pupil's safety and well-being. The designated safeguarding lead knows pupils well and is in a strong position to take prompt action when needed.
- The school has successfully reduced persistent absence among the number of disadvantaged pupils. Any absence is followed up quickly and support offered to families to reduce the need for pupils not attending school. As a result of being in school more regularly, disadvantaged pupils make better progress and achieve more highly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, inspection evidence and leadership monitoring shows that there are examples of effective teaching at every key stage. However, this is not consistent enough to ensure that all pupils make good enough progress from their starting points.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who, on most occasions, respond positively to all adults. As a result, pupils are generally well behaved in class, keen to learn and want to do well.
- Teaching in Year 6 is improving. In this year group, teachers are beginning to embed

challenge to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress. Teachers are creative in their approaches to developing fundamental literacy skills that pupils have not yet fully mastered. For example, an inspector observed a lesson where pupils developed their comprehension skills through listening to a history presentation about Anne Frank and comparing their notes with each other. Consequently, pupils are being better prepared for the next stage of their education.

- Pupils are not always fully aware of what they need to do to improve in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers do not regularly set targets and monitor pupils' grasp of specific concepts precisely enough. For example, in some cases pupils continue to make the same mistakes in their books and this has not been addressed by the teachers. Therefore, pupils are unaware of how well they are doing and what they can do better.
- In some lessons, the most able pupils are challenged well to extend their thinking. However, teachers are not always flexible enough in their approach and do not change what they have planned to do in order to allow pupils to apply learned skills. Consequently, there are missed opportunities for pupils to have the chance to think deeply about what they are learning. This means that most-able pupils are not achieving the higher standard that they are capable of.
- Pupils enjoy writing in a range of genres. They take pride in redrafting and presenting their written work to others. Teachers in both key stages 1 and 2 devote more time to writing than reading. In writing, teacher feedback is more incisive and helpful. As a result, pupils make better progress in writing than reading.
- Pupils are proud of their work and eager to share it with visitors. However, teachers do not stress the importance of good handwriting, resulting in some poor presentation in key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading and writing books.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Where it is strongest, teachers challenge pupils with appropriate tasks and progress is clear to see. Interventions by teaching assistants in mathematics lessons are particularly effective. To ensure that pupils' misunderstandings are addressed, staff employ a range of strategies that help to quicken progress.
- Key stage 1 teachers have a sound understanding of phonics. Consequently, Year 1 pupils make good progress and learn to read well. An inspector listened to Year 1 pupils read and noted the ways in which they applied their phonics knowledge effectively to read unfamiliar words.
- The teaching of reading is not as strong as in other subjects across the school. Teachers at key stage 2 do not always sufficiently challenge pupils in reading lessons. This is because teachers lack the appropriate subject knowledge to teach reading effectively. As a result, older pupils are not acquiring appropriate reading skills to show that they understand what they are reading.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well by the school. They liaise effectively with teachers to ensure appropriately individualised support for pupils in their lessons. Additionally, the subject knowledge of teaching assistants is strong and they plan closely with teachers. As a result, teaching assistants' work contributes effectively to the increasing progress that pupils make when in their care.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes different forms of bullying. They told inspectors that bullying is rare. Pupils also say that they would have someone to turn to if they had any worries or concerns at all. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about road safety, and how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils talk confidently about the school vision 'learning and achieving together – today, tomorrow, for life'. They told inspectors that they like being part of a primary school, and the older pupils are very caring towards the younger pupils. One pupil told the inspector 'this school is full of kind people.'
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school. However, approximately one third expressed some concern about pupils' behaviour in school and with how effectively the school deals with bullying. Inspection evidence did not support this view.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves well in and around school. They are friendly and polite to visitors.
- Pupils' behaviour is positive in lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning are largely very positive. They work well with others in the class and listen respectfully to their teachers. Most pupils work hard and try their best, and are proud of their successes. In some lessons, pupils lose concentration when working, and are restless while the teacher talks. Generally, during breaktimes and lunchtimes pupils are kind to each other and play well together. On the occasions when 'rough play' causes upset, pupils say that they would approach an adult and know that it would get sorted out.
- Pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour are well supported through appropriate interventions. As a result, they cause little disruption to the learning of other pupils.
- Overall attendance is improving. The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time and are eager to learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because pupils' achievement is too variable across the school. As a result, some pupils do not do as well as they should. This is particularly the case in reading.
- The majority of children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those

typical for their age. During their Nursery Year and Reception Year, children make good progress from their starting points and the number achieving a good level of development is increasing over time.

- The proportion of pupils passing the Year 1 national check on phonics has risen significantly and pupils enjoy reading. Inspection evidence and leadership monitoring show that phonics lessons are improving. This is verified when hearing pupils read and they accurately apply their phonics knowledge to work out what unfamiliar words say.
- Historically, Year 2 pupils have not achieved well enough in reading, writing and mathematics. However, school information shows that achievement at key stage 1 is improving. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who reached both the expected and the high standard in reading was below the national average. The proportion of Year 6 pupils who reached the expected standard in mathematics was in line with national average; however, the proportion who reached the high standard was below the national average. As a result, pupils have not been fully ready for the next stage of their education. This is now changing and pupils' progress is improving. Pupils' books show that more pupils are currently making better progress in order to catch up by the time they leave Year 6.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils, while improving in writing and mathematics, is not yet as good in reading. However, routine monitoring and review of the support that has been put in place to help disadvantaged pupils is ensuring that over time the differences are diminishing compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is due to effective support from the intervention teachers and well-trained teaching assistants, in small group sessions or through one-to-one support in the classroom. Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully. They regularly review the additional support needed, and the difference it makes to these pupils' progress.
- Expectations are not high enough for the most able pupils in some classes, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of most-able pupils who attained the higher standard was significantly less than their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have acted upon this and the work in pupils' books shows that many pupils are now doing better. However, some still do not make good enough progress, relative to their starting points.
- The work in pupils' books and on display around the school shows that pupils are starting to achieve better across the curriculum. For example, inspectors observed pupils achieving well through effective teaching in art, history and religious education lessons. Pupils regularly have the chance to work collaboratively with others on creative activities linked to topics. The opportunities that pupils have are securing better outcomes in curriculum subjects other than English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children join the school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. However, by the end of Reception the majority of children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children, and the most able, make good progress in their learning, and, as a consequence, are ready for key stage 1.
- Teaching is good because there are a range of activities, both child- and adult-led, which appeal to children's personal experiences and interests. Additionally, staff use questions carefully to probe children's understanding and build on their natural curiosity to learn. Staff interact well and intervene appropriately with children, ensuring effective support for children of all abilities. This good provision supports children so they achieve well.
- The Reception area has recently been improved to enable more opportunities for free flow between the indoor area and the outside. The new larger space provides more varied activities that incorporate all areas of the early years curriculum. As a result, children achieve better because they can apply their skills across all areas of learning.
- Children are encouraged to use a range of attractive resources to help them learn. The children move seamlessly between activities with appropriate adult support. Reading, writing and mathematics are implicit in all activities and pupils make good progress in their phonics.
- Teachers monitor and track children's development unobtrusively. They plan each of the activities with understanding and reference to pupils' abilities. Sufficient challenge is established in the range of activities and children develop their early literacy skills effectively. For example, an inspector observed children confidently writing detailed invitations to the Christmas play.
- Children are happy and eager to learn. They behave and play together well. They help each other, share equipment well and follow school routines.
- Staff ensure that the children are safe. Leaders monitor the school environment to ensure safety both in the inside and outside areas at all times.

School details

Unique reference number	115282
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10011826

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Schooling
Headteacher	Neil Woollcott
Telephone number	01992 715885
Website	www.leverton.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@leverton.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leverton is a larger than average primary school, following the extension of the junior school to include early years and key stage 1 in September 2016.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about complaints procedures and how parents can request copies of documents on its website.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is broadly in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended two school assemblies. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the assistant headteachers.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior, middle and subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the early years leader, newly qualified teachers, two governors, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils' informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also attended the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Years 1 and 5 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents including: assessment information; minutes from governors' meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 80 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, including free text comments, and one letter from a parent. They also spoke to some parents before school at the beginning of the inspection, and during the inspection.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Aykin	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Ladner	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector

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