

Lydlynch Infant School

Lydlynch Road, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire SO40 3DW

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 was well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils achieved much less well than other pupils nationally.
- Although there has been improved progress in reading and writing this academic year, including for disadvantaged pupils, progress in mathematics is not yet good.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, especially in writing and mathematics. The most able pupils are not challenged to achieve the highest standards.
- Teaching in mathematics is too focused on computation. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop their skills by solving problems and using mathematical reasoning.
- Leaders' improvement plans are not sharp enough and do not include clear, measurable targets. As a result, this limits governors' ability to hold the school thoroughly to account.
- Teachers and adults do not routinely check on pupils' understanding during lessons. As a result, some pupils find their work too hard, while others continue with work that does not challenge them or deepen their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive headteacher and senior leaders have had an immediate, positive impact since their appointment in May 2016. They have focused on the right things. The school is well placed to improve rapidly.
- Leaders have placed the well-being of every pupil at the heart of the school's vision and values. Pupils know they are safe. Parents feel welcomed and involved.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide strong pastoral support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, their attendance has improved and their progress is accelerating.
- Children get off to a strong start in the early years foundation stage. Teachers and adults provide a rich environment and plan interesting activities, so that children make good progress.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading and writing throughout the school. Teachers have focused on spelling and handwriting and this has helped pupils to write more clearly and accurately.
- Teachers have regular opportunities to develop their skills and professional knowledge. They are becoming more reflective and are keen to act on constructive feedback.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the effectiveness of leaders and governors by ensuring that:
 - improvement plans have measurable success criteria with clear timescales, so that their impact can be assessed
 - leaders at all levels rigorously evaluate the impact of their actions on the progress of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve, especially the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - adults check on how well pupils are learning in a lesson so they can quickly help those who are struggling, and offer greater challenge to pupils who are secure in their understanding.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers have a thorough understanding of the new national curriculum requirements and how to put them into practice
 - teachers regularly offer opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning, and use their skills to solve problems and investigations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher's determined leadership has made an immediate, positive impact on the school. There is now a more inclusive, aspirational culture in the school, which teachers, pupils, support staff and parents have fully embraced.
- The federation's vision statement captures the heart of the school's mission: '... to create a positive, stimulating learning environment in which everyone feels valued and respected.' This has a wholly positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The executive headteacher and senior leaders have identified the most important areas to address first. The school has rightly focused on ensuring the social and emotional well-being of each child. Leaders have carried out much work to provide nurturing support for pupils who need it, including disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's improvement plan is detailed and comprehensive, but does not yet focus enough on pupils' progress. This plan and all other monitoring activities need to be sharper, with clear, measurable success criteria. Leaders can then better focus on the impact actions will have, on outcomes for all pupils.
- The school has made good use of the pupil premium funding to help disadvantaged pupils. This has resulted in these pupils making rapid progress this academic year, especially in writing.
- Senior leaders have identified writing as an area for urgent improvement, with a particular focus on spelling and handwriting. Work in pupils' books shows clear evidence of strong progress from all starting points.
- Leaders have carefully cultivated a whole-school culture of continual improvement. Teachers across the federation now regularly discuss teaching and learning, in a constant drive to improve their own professional effectiveness.
- The school is outward looking and senior leaders actively engage with other schools, organisations and the local authority as part of their determined action to improve.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. While rightly focusing on improving outcomes in English and mathematics, it also provides children with an interesting range of topics to engage their interest. It includes lessons to help children to stay safe, including online, and has a strong focus on respect and equality. It introduces pupils to fundamental British values.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility. Most have an accurate view of what is working well and what needs to improve. They use pupils' achievement information to set achievable targets. However, monitoring and evaluation is not yet precise enough or sufficiently focused to improve outcomes of specific groups of pupils.
- Teachers at all stages of their careers have carefully tailored professional development to improve their skills and help them to pursue leadership opportunities, as well as keeping up to date with changes in education.
- Staff are wholly positive and enjoy being part of the school team. One said: 'Our

school has a lovely community feel, and we are working hard to continue to nurture and develop this in order to promote life-long learning for our children.'

- The sports leader makes sure that the physical education (PE) and sports premium is used well. Teachers' confidence in teaching PE has increased with the investment in a new scheme of work. There are now more opportunities for pupils to take exercise at breaktimes and after school. A greater number of pupils represent the school in competitive sports beyond the school day.
- The local authority offers valuable support to the school and has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. It is confident in the ability of the executive headteacher and her senior team to secure rapid improvements.

Governance of the school

- The governing body of the federation knows the school well. It draws on a range of sources to inform its knowledge and understanding of the school. Members visit the school to check on different aspects of the school improvement plan. They use this information to form a clear view of its strengths as well as what it needs to improve.
- Governors use the school improvement plan to check on the effectiveness of the school's work. However, this could be done more effectively if the improvement plan included timed and measurable success criteria.
- The committees of the governing body fulfil all their statutory responsibilities. Governors are hard working and organised, with clear areas of responsibility and lists of actions that need to be carried out by specific dates.
- Safeguarding is at the heart of governors' work. They make sure that they are informed about how well the school looks after pupils, and how risks are managed so that pupils are kept from harm. Governors play an active role in ensuring that all appropriate checks are made when employing new staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school places safeguarding at the heart of everything it does. Clear policies, procedures and systems are in place to make sure that no pupil is at risk of harm. Pupils say that there is always an adult that they can talk to if they have any worries.
- Adults are well trained and have a thorough understanding of what to do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders have made sure that all adults know how to report such concerns directly, as the phone number to call is on the reverse of each member of staff's identity badge.
- The school is quick to engage with external agencies and support services to ensure the safety and well-being of all children. Work to fully involve parents in their children's education has further strengthened safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not high enough. There are too few opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and apply

their skills and knowledge. Activities provided, when pupils have successfully completed work, are not demanding enough. These activities typically ask pupils to do more of the same work, rather than offering a real challenge. This is especially true in writing and mathematics.

- Teaching in mathematics is not yet good, as it focuses too much on pupils working on mathematical calculations. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems, or to reason and develop their thinking about patterns in mathematics. Teachers' understanding of the requirements of the new national curriculum for mathematics is still not strong enough.
- The school's policy of pupils receiving personalised, verbal feedback means that most pupils are clear about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. However, adults do not systematically check on how well pupils are learning in a lesson. As a result, those pupils who are struggling sometimes stall in their learning, while pupils who are secure in their understanding complete work that is too easy for them.
- Writing is carefully taught with a particular emphasis, this year, on spelling and handwriting. Teachers plan sequences of lessons based on a topic and make sure that this includes writing for a real audience. Examples of this included fairy stories that pupils read to their parents, and lists of questions that they would pose to Queen Victoria, to find out more about her. Inspectors enjoyed watching pupils put their questions to three adults who were immaculately dressed as three different queens.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm, affirming and based on mutual respect. Teachers are swift to offer well-earned praise and encouragement. This creates classrooms where pupils get on well, are keen to learn and try to do their best.
- Pupils enjoy lessons. One said: 'You get to learn a lot. I like to surprise my mum when I get home with how much I've learned.'
- Reading is taught well. From the time they start school, children quickly acquire and practise phonics skills. The well-resourced library and carefully structured reading scheme help teachers to enthuse pupils to become confident readers who enjoy books. The teaching of phonics is improving in key stage 1.
- The executive headteacher took immediate action to improve the classrooms for pupils when she started at the school. As a result, learning environments are inviting, well-organised places, with displays that help to reinforce pupils' learning, and offer help when they become stuck. There is a wide range of resources to support pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics. All classes have computers readily available for pupils to use.
- Teachers seize the many opportunities they have to learn from colleagues in the federation and in other schools. They attend courses run by the local authority to improve their teaching and develop their skills. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. One parent said: 'If I don't know enough about how well my child is doing, it's my fault and not the school's.'

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. There is a culture of mutual respect between all members of this harmonious community. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of equality, and demonstrate respect for all.
- Parents, including those in difficult situations, all speak highly of the school and the care it shows to all pupils. One parent commented: 'It has been fantastic to see [my child's] confidence grow within such a short space of time. I put this down to her feeling safe and comfortable in her class.' Such comments are typical of the praise that parents give the school.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that the school is a friendly place where pupils look after each other. Pupils have a basic understanding of what bullying is, but they say that it never happens in school.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe. Even in Reception classes, children are able to manage risk and keep themselves safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils behave well and work hard. Their behaviour only slips occasionally. This happens when they find the work too hard or too easy, or when the teaching does not engage their interest. At these times, one or two pupils can become distracted and lose concentration.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. They are polite and well mannered. Adults speak positively about how well pupils behave. On the second day of the inspection, there was an unplanned fire drill caused by an electrical fault. Pupils all responded impeccably. They quickly followed teachers' instructions and behaved responsibly.
- The school has worked hard to improve the behaviour of the very few pupils with behavioural challenges. Leaders have worked closely with parents and sought help from external agencies when this has been needed. As a result, the behaviour of these pupils has improved considerably.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance at the school, especially the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. A high proportion of these pupils were persistently absent in the last academic year. The school carefully monitors the attendance of all groups of pupils, and works relentlessly with parents and carers to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. As a result of these actions, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved considerably and absence figures for other groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now close to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 pupils' attainment was below the national average in all subjects at the end of key stage 1, but particularly in writing and mathematics. These pupils did not make enough progress from their assessments at the end of the early years foundation stage, when their attainment was much closer to national figures. This represents a dip in standards for a school where standards were in line with national figures in 2015.
- Too few pupils achieved the higher standard at the end of Year 2 in 2016. No pupils achieved it in writing and only a very few managed it in mathematics.
- Evidence in pupils' books and in the school's tracking information shows that pupils are now making stronger progress in writing. From their different starting points, pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation are all improving, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are becoming more adventurous in their use of vocabulary. However, this progress is not as rapid as it should be for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Progress is not yet good in mathematics. Too much time is spent on computation and pupils have too few opportunities to develop their understanding of mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils did much less well than other pupils nationally, in 2016, but this year their progress is accelerating, especially in reading and writing. There is little difference between their attainment and that of other pupils, who are not disadvantaged. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also making similar progress to other pupils with the same starting points.
- Pupils are making strong progress in reading. They enjoy books, are able to talk about ones they enjoy and show good comprehension skills. Pupils are usually able to use phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words.
- Outcomes in the phonics screening check dipped in 2016, although disadvantaged pupils achieved well. However, pupils are more successful in learning phonics this year, as a result of careful teaching and a well-designed curriculum.

Early years provision

Good

- Teaching in the early years foundation stage is good. Teachers use the well-resourced environment indoors and outdoors to plan rich opportunities for enquiry and exploration through play. Children become engaged, independent learners.
- Teachers also plan for focused teaching time. Phonics is well taught and, as a result, children quickly learn to recognise sounds and letters to develop early reading and writing. Mathematics is also taught effectively.
- There is a good level of challenge that is not always seen in classes in key stage 1. However, more should be done to increase the level of expectation of what the most able pupils can achieve, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Careful, accurate baseline judgements mean that adults can target the needs of individual children effectively. As a result, even though children enter school with starting points typically below those for their age, they all make good progress. By the

end of the school year, children are well prepared to start Year 1.

- In 2016, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was below the national figure. However standards have steadily improved for the last two years. Evidence found during the inspection points to children doing even better this year.
- Although relatively new to the role, the early years leader has a comprehensive understanding of how young children learn and provides strong leadership.
- The early years leader has undertaken speech and language level 3 training. This has enabled the school to focus on children's early language development, which has played a vital role in improving children's communication skills.
- Good relationships with parents ensure that they are well informed about their children's progress and can work with the school to support their children's learning.
- Pupil premium funding is used wisely to support pupils at all ability levels. Although, in 2016, disadvantaged children did much less well than other pupils, there is now no difference between the work produced by disadvantaged children and others. As a result, the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged children and other children nationally is diminishing.
- Children are confident and friendly. They play and learn well together and this makes a strong contribution to their learning.
- Children feel safe. Adults are trained and equipped to look after children well. All statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	115954
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024634

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Withers
Executive headteacher	Cathy Davies
Telephone number	02380 863188
Website	www.federationofhazelwoodandlydlynch.co.uk/
Email address	adminoffice@lydlynch.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school joined a federation with Hazel Wood, an outstanding infant school, in May 2016. This followed several years in which there had been considerable turbulence in the leadership of Lydlynch Infant School. The headteacher of Hazel Wood became the executive headteacher of the federation. The current head of school at Lydlynch also moved from Hazel Wood.
- Lydlynch Infant School is a smaller than average infant school. It has two classes in each year group.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is below the national average.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes across the school. A learning walk was carried out jointly with the executive headteacher and the head of school. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the following people: pupils; the chair of the governing body and five other governors; the executive headteacher and senior leaders; and middle leaders. The lead inspector had a telephone interview with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors undertook a check of the school's policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including the statutory checks made during the recruitment of new staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the comments of nine parents who expressed their views using the free-text facility. Inspectors also spoke to parents in the playground at the start of the day.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 20 responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Redman	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Bulmer	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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