

# Leighswood School

Broadmeadow, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 8HZ

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is too generous. This is because they do not use good-quality information to evaluate the work of the school in sufficient depth.
- Governors do not evaluate the impact of pupil premium funding in order to ensure that eligible pupils are given good-quality support.
- Leaders do not effectively check the attendance figures of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders do not check up effectively on the progress pupils make in writing across key stages 1 and 2.
- Not all pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able pupils, can achieve are not high enough.
- Teachers do not use assessment information during lessons to identify those pupils who could move on in their learning.
- Leaders tracking of pupils' progress has not focused clearly enough on the performance of groups of pupils. As a result, in some year groups the most able disadvantaged pupils are underperforming, particularly in mathematics.
- Exclusion rates for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remain too high.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the early years and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Leaders and governors work well as a team, are committed and have the capacity to improve the school.
- The school provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities, which supports the broad and balanced curriculum.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils successfully apply their phonic skills when reading.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development and welfare, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress throughout key stages 1 and 2, by ensuring that teachers:
  - have high expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are capable of achieving
  - set work which challenges pupils, especially the most able
  - use assessment information during lessons to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - self-evaluation arises from robust and precise information so that leaders have an accurate view of the school's weaknesses as well as its strengths
  - governors effectively monitor the impact pupil premium funding has on raising achievement for disadvantaged pupils
  - leaders robustly monitor the rates of attendance and exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure these improve at a rapid pace
  - leaders effectively track and analyse pupils' attainment in writing across key stages 1 and 2
  - the tracking and monitoring of the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils is robust, so that their attainment rises, particularly in mathematics.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- School leaders and governors have been overgenerous in their self-evaluation of the school's performance. Leaders have not always used the information that they have to correctly identify key areas that need to be improved. As a result, leaders have failed to sustain the good quality of education identified in the last inspection. For example, leaders have not used assessment information to identify the rates of progress for different groups of pupils, in particular the most able, and so this is not yet identified as a focus for school improvement.
- The school's systems for assessing writing are not fit for purpose. Leaders are not in a position to effectively track pupils' achievement in writing. As a result, they do not know how well pupils, or groups of pupils, are progressing towards meeting the standards they are expected to achieve by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They are not able to identify ways to secure better outcomes for pupils in writing across key stages 1 and 2.
- Leaders do not use the information they gather about the performance of disadvantaged pupils well enough to identify which of these pupils are not making the progress they are capable of. Not enough detailed analysis is made of their performance and, as a result, in some year groups disadvantaged pupils underperform compared to pupils nationally. This is particularly so for the most able disadvantaged pupils. In mathematics, the school provided targeted interventions to support lower-ability disadvantaged pupils to make better progress. However, evidence from the school's assessments shows that it was the most able disadvantaged pupils who needed this input. Therefore, the actions taken by the school did not effectively address the needs of the pupils.
- The school keeps good records of incidents of poor behaviour, but leaders do not analyse this thoroughly enough to identify how to avoid exclusions and so improve behaviour.
- The headteacher and governors of the school work as a team and are eager to ensure that Leighswood School improves and provides the best possible education for its pupils. They have taken actions that show they have the capacity to improve the school, for example developing phonics teaching to ensure that pupils use phonics more confidently. Senior leaders are ably supported by middle leaders who share their enthusiasm and commitment. They are knowledgeable about the areas they lead and are keen to play an active role in the school's journey of improvement.
- Performance management is being used to identify areas of underperformance. Leaders have devised a programme of training, which involves both internal and external support. Staff spoken to during the inspection appreciated the opportunity to work with others in order to improve the quality of their teaching.
- The school's topic-led curriculum ensures that pupils receive an appropriate balance and breadth across a range of subjects. Exciting titles such as 'Peasants, Princes and Pestilence' help engage and capture pupils' interests. During these topics pupils draw on their knowledge from a range of subjects and are given

opportunities to use a variety of resources. This helps pupils to make connections between subjects, making their learning relevant and more enjoyable.

- The curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of safety and knowledge of the world, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils confidently discussed British values with inspectors. They know what is right and what is wrong, can make informed decisions and understand the importance of keeping each other safe.
- The physical education and sport funding is used well to promote pupils' participation in physical activity. There is a wide range of sporting activities, both in school and through extra-curricular activities. At lunchtimes, pupils are eager to get outside and enjoy the additional opportunities provided to engage in further games and activities. As a result, pupils are now taking part in physical activities on a more regular basis.
- Funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent effectively. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Parents are supportive of the school. The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body takes care to review the pupil premium report. However, it does not challenge the school on whether this funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. For example, governors were unaware that the funding allocated specifically to support improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils had had very limited impact so far.
- The governors pay regular visits to the school and report on their findings to the standards committee or the full governing body.
- Governors fully understand the link between performance and pay progression. Present arrangements for the annual review of the headteacher's performance are appropriate and supported externally.
- Governors ensure that the school's website meets all statutory requirements.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors have a good understanding of their part in creating a culture of safeguarding in the school and demonstrate that they are aware of their statutory responsibilities and duty to keep pupils safe.
- There are clear systems in place to ensure that appropriate referrals to outside agencies are made. These are completed correctly and in a timely manner.
- The single central record of checks on the backgrounds of teachers and other staff is well maintained.

- All staff receive safeguarding training on recognising any potential signs of risk. Staff know what to do should they have any concerns.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have not maintained the good teaching seen at the last inspection or raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is not yet a drive to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information during lessons sharply enough to ensure that they quickly identify those pupils who are ready to move on in their learning or deepen their understanding. Some pupils spend too long completing activities that are too easy and, as a result, they are not challenged to secure greater depth in their learning.
- Pupils' books across a range of subjects show inconsistencies in teachers' expectations, which is resulting in uneven rates of progress. The most able pupils are not given work which is challenging. Therefore they do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- Teaching assistants effectively support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide high-quality interventions for these pupils. Their support is focused on the specific needs of these pupils and, as a result, they make good progress.
- Phonics is taught effectively in the early years and key stage 1. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have received effective training to teach phonics.
- Reading is well promoted in the school. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly. Pupils who read to inspectors read fluently and confidently explained the choices that they make about their favourite books and authors. Pupils also enjoy taking books home and reading them to their parents.
- The school has recently introduced a new system to teach mathematics. At the time of the inspection it was too early for inspectors to make a judgement about the impact this is having on raising pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Teachers develop pupils' writing skills effectively and pupils apply their punctuation, spelling and grammar skills within their independent writing.

### 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 are known well as individuals and are well cared for by staff.
- The school works hard to support pupils who have additional social or emotional needs. The nurture team supports and encourages these pupils through celebrating their achievements and raising their aspirations. This helps to improve their attitudes to learning and increases their confidence and self-discipline.

- Pupils spoken to during the inspection talked confidently about the importance of keeping themselves active and healthy.
- There is a range of opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibilities. For example, they can become playground buddies or join the school council.
- Pupils are taught about the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and racist bullying. They know who to speak to if they are concerned about bullying and felt that the adults would listen and help them.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school. They could talk about strategies for keeping themselves safe, especially when using the internet.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Exclusion rates for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not reducing at a fast enough rate. Incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour are recorded. Records clearly show the actions that the school takes to deal with incidents and how parents are informed. However, although school leaders monitor behaviour over time, they do not evaluate this information effectively enough.
- In 2015 and 2016 the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was too low. The school has recently started to work with families and individual pupils to challenge them to raise their attendance. Although attendance for these pupils has risen slightly, leaders are still not monitoring the impact of this work effectively. As a result, attendance is not improving quickly enough and rates of persistent absence are still too high.
- Pupils behave well during the school day, including at break and lunchtime. As they move around the school, most pupils are orderly and calm. Pupils are polite and well mannered, readily opening the doors for visitors.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs are well run and promote a positive social experience for all the pupils who attend. Pupils behave well while participating in a wide range of activities.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils currently make uneven rates of progress across year groups and subjects. This is due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the lack of challenge for pupils during lessons. As a result, not all pupils across key stages 1 and 2 are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points.
- Current assessment information confirms that pupils' attainment is not rising fast enough. Leaders do not have the information they need to check on how much progress pupils and groups of pupils make. This is particularly the case in writing, where a lack of information is resulting in too few pupils at the end of key stage 1 attaining the expected standard.

- Disadvantaged pupils are not making fast enough progress. Leaders are not closely monitoring the progress of these pupils from their different starting points. As a result, the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and pupils nationally are not diminishing. This is particularly so in mathematics where the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was below that of all pupils nationally.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, most pupils made broadly the same rates of progress in mathematics as other pupils nationally. In writing and reading, pupils made better progress than pupils nationally. Consequently, these pupils were appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because leaders effectively monitor and track the progress these pupils make. Pupils' individual needs are identified at an early stage and effective support is provided to ensure these needs are precisely met.
- The most able pupils at key stage 2 made progress that was broadly in line with pupils nationally at the end of Year 6 in 2016. Observations in lessons and work seen during the inspection indicate that in some year groups these pupils are not making better progress because the level of challenge in their work is inconsistent.
- Pupils' achievement in phonics has improved since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is now above the national average. During the inspection inspectors observed pupils making good gains in their phonics knowledge and skills.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership of the early years provision is good. The early years leader has an accurate view of the issues that need addressing and has put in place effective actions to make sure that children make good progress. For example, she has correctly identified the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and other children nationally and has used funding to provide specific interventions and support. These children are making good progress and as a result the attainment gap is diminishing across all areas of learning.
- Generally children start the early years with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They settle quickly and are keen to learn and explore so that by the time they leave the Reception Year the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above the national figures. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader and staff team have ensured that the effectiveness of the early years is also consistent for those children who start school at the age of two. These children also make good progress. This is because staff work well together to support and extend their learning. Staff ensure that these children are provided with a range of stimulating resources, both indoors and outdoors, that are relevant to their age and stage of development. Children are able to move easily between areas of learning and gain confidence from doing so.
- Children's behaviour in the early years is good and they get on, learn and play well with each other. Routines are well established and consistently applied by staff and

as a result, relationships between adults and children are warm and positive.

- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. The early years leader is enthusiastic and committed to improving this further. For example, she has an accurate view of the need to challenge the most able children more effectively in their learning.
- Children are safe and feel safe in the early years. Statutory welfare requirements are met. Staff are appropriately trained in all aspects of safeguarding and are confident in the action to take if they spot any concerns.
- Staff in the early years build positive relationships with parents. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's learning and contribute to their learning journals.



## School details

Unique reference number	131433
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10000847

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	615
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Corrie Halford
Headteacher	Duncan Speirs
Telephone number	01922 743621
Website	<a href="http://www.leighswood.walsall.sch.uk/">www.leighswood.walsall.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:postbox@leighswood.walsall.sch.uk">postbox@leighswood.walsall.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–9 February 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Leighswood School is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- A breakfast and after-school club is run for the pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. A number of these observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- The inspectors met with pupils and heard pupils read. The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons. Inspectors also visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors spoke to governors, a representative from the local authority, staff, pupils, parents and senior leaders.
- The opinions of parents were considered through 70 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and conversations with parents before and after school.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, information about managing teachers' performance and staff training records. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety was also analysed.

### Inspection team

Kerry Rochester, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Benetia Mounsey	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Bailie	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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