

Leen Mills Primary School

Leen Mills Lane, Vaughan Estate, Hucknall, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG15 8BZ

Inspection dates

28–29 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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

- Senior leaders have not been successful in raising standards quickly enough. Since the last inspection, pupils' progress declined. It was significantly below national figures in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 for the three years up to 2015.
- In 2016, progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 was still significantly below average. In mathematics, faster progress led to above-average standards.
- Pupils in Year 6 are now making better progress in all subjects and are reaching standards in line with expectations for their age. In some other year groups, however, the majority of pupils are still working below the required standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils in most year groups are not making as much progress as other pupils nationally. Leaders do not have a clear view of the effectiveness of the support they provide.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. They do not always plan lessons that cater for the needs of the full ability range. Too often, the least able and the most able pupils do not make enough progress in lessons.
- Pupils' books across a range of subjects and year groups show that, typically, the same tasks are set for pupils of all abilities. This means that the most able pupils are not given enough challenge and do not reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- In key stage 1, pupils do not build quickly enough on the good progress they make in the early years. Too many are currently working below age-related expectations.

The school has the following strengths

- In the early years, the quality of teaching is securely good and provision in this area continues to be a strength of the school. Children make consistently good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. Pupils are respectful to others and show positive attitudes to learning.
- The school is well regarded by parents. It has a caring ethos and is a safe, calm and well-ordered learning environment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress for pupils of all abilities in key stages 1 and 2, including those who are disadvantaged, by:
 - teachers raising their expectations of what pupils in Years 1 and 2 can achieve so that all pupils build on their attainment at the end of the Reception Year
 - leaders ensuring that the recent improvements in teaching and learning that have been successful in some year groups are consistently in place throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the curriculum so that pupils achieve well in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that teachers match work more closely to pupils' abilities
 - ensuring that teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons and intervene quickly to tackle misconceptions, especially with lower-attaining pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve so that those pupils reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Improve leadership at all levels by:
 - making sure that leaders have a secure overview of the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils throughout the year
 - using more regular and timely analysis of assessment information to identify priorities for improvement.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not acted urgently enough to raise achievement since the last inspection. The measures taken by leaders to stem declining rates of progress have been recent and, despite early signs of improvement, have not yet had a big enough impact on pupils' achievement.
- The current headteacher, appointed in 2013, has an enthusiastic vision for the school. Under his direction, other senior leaders have now been appointed who are developing a grasp of the school's key strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has made sure that leadership is now more widely shared and, working as a team of senior and middle leaders, leaders are now in a stronger position to secure further improvement.
- The school improvement plan is detailed and clearly focused on pupils' progress. Leaders have accurately identified the school's key strengths and areas for improvement. For example, in response to slow progress in reading in 2016, the school introduced a focus on reading throughout the school. This is having a positive effect and recent assessments show that progress in reading is at least as strong as it is in writing and mathematics.
- Although leaders are tackling the correct areas for improvement, they do not have an up-to-date and accurate overview of the impact of their actions. In particular, leaders have only very recently gathered information about the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have not yet carried out an analysis of this information. They are not aware, therefore, that disadvantaged pupils are not doing as well as other pupils and that some have made no progress in any subject since the autumn term. As a result, leaders do not currently have a secure and precise overview of the performance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Clear plans show how disadvantaged pupils will be supported to make the best possible progress. Leaders do not check the impact of these plans often enough throughout the year, however, so they are not aware how effectively the pupil premium funding is being spent and what difference it makes to the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' views of the quality of teaching and learning in the school are too generous. Leaders carry out a range of suitable activities, such as lesson observations, data checks and scrutiny of pupils' work, to check the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. External moderation by staff from the local authority and partner schools shows recent improvement but their evaluations of the current quality of teaching are also too generous. The school is not yet securely good in these key aspects of its work.
- Leaders use the additional primary physical education and sport premium funding to good effect. Extra-curricular clubs are well attended and pupils have many opportunities to improve their physical fitness through the range and quality of activities on offer.
- The school's curriculum successfully promotes pupils' good behaviour and personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils participated in an Easter-themed assembly with thoughtfulness and enthusiasm. Pupils

have a strong moral sense, value friendship and respect one another. They show a sound understanding of fundamental British values.

- The curriculum is also designed to enhance pupils' learning experiences by providing a rich variety of opportunities, such as educational visits and extra-curricular activities. In particular, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their visits to Newstead Abbey, the local library and Cresswell Crags. They were also full of enthusiasm for recent topics about Vikings and 'Battles of Britain'.
- Music is a key strength of the school's curriculum and throughout the inspection pupils skilfully engaged in a wide range of musical activities. Pupils in Year 4 have recently performed in a musical event at the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham and others are involved in a production of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' at a local secondary school. Pupils of all ages sing beautifully in class and in assemblies. Pupils in Year 3 enjoy their whole-class sessions to learn to play the recorder. A sizeable, well-resourced music room hosts a range of instrumental lessons throughout the week.

Governance of the school

- The relatively new chair of the governing body works effectively with the headteacher to monitor standards and oversee statutory duties such as safeguarding. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively and governors have received all of the appropriate training.
- Governors are aware that the school has gone through a period of decline and have confidence in the renewed leadership team to bring about the required improvements. The governing body has approved the additional funding necessary to provide smaller teaching groups in the current Year 6 in order to raise standards. Because governors have a sound overview of the work of the school and receive detailed information from the headteacher, they do not shy away from challenging leaders on the school's performance. They are rightly focused on pupils' well-being and progress, and are especially mindful of the needs of parents and the local community.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All policies and procedures meet requirements. All checks are scrupulous, and training for staff and governors is up to date and carefully documented.
- A culture of safety and care runs through all of the school's work; the school is safe and pupils say they feel 'very, very, very safe'. This view is echoed by parents; all of those who spoke with inspectors during the inspection agreed that their children are safe at school.
- Throughout the inspection, staff in all areas of the school were discreetly sensitive to pupils' needs, especially to more vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The designated leader for safeguarding deals with any concerns promptly. Staff follow up concerns professionally with relevant external agencies to protect pupils from harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently effective in key stages 1 and 2. Teachers do not always match work closely enough to the needs and abilities of all pupils. When this happens, learning slows and pupils do not make fast enough progress. Recent improvements in teaching are not fully in place in all classes.
- Too often, teaching is targeted towards the middle ability pupils in a class. Teachers do not provide enough support for the least able pupils and do not plan enough challenge into work for the most able pupils. As a result, the least able and the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make enough progress.
- Teachers in key stage 1 and in parts of key stage 2 do not always assess and check pupils' understanding well enough in lessons. Consequently, pupils' misconceptions go uncorrected and they lose momentum in their learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson, some less-able pupils struggled to complete work on number patterns because they had misunderstood the learning objective. Likewise, in an English lesson, pupils who were unable to distinguish between adjectives and conjunctions spent a proportion of the lesson confused and unable to complete their work. In these cases, and in other similar instances, this went unchecked and unnoticed by the teacher.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. The work in pupils' books is neat and well presented but, typically, pupils' books in key stages 1 and 2 show that the same tasks are set for pupils of all abilities. This means that the most able pupils find the tasks too easy and their progress is too slow. Where 'challenge' tasks are available, pupils often have to complete the lower-level task first before they are allowed to try something more demanding that would make them think and stimulate their imagination. During discussions with pupils, they said that they enjoy challenging tasks that make them think. They commented that they find their work easy for much of the time and would particularly enjoy more challenge in science and mathematics.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, as shown by the interesting and varied the work seen in pupils' science books in key stage 2. Consistent evidence across a range of year groups, however, showed that pupils of all abilities complete identical tasks, with limited opportunities to pursue learning at greater depth. Teachers provide too few opportunities to complete extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English.
- Teachers apply the school's marking and feedback policy consistently in all year groups. Pupils frequently respond in writing to the feedback given. The feedback given to pupils does not always lead them on to further learning, however. Too often, the feedback merely prompts them to repeat an aspect of a task and does not challenge them to think deeply about their work or extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils engage well with learning and the vast majority of lessons are calm and orderly. On the rare occasions where behaviour was observed to weaken slightly, it related to pupils' misunderstanding of the task. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and this promotes learning well. Pupils of all ages are eager learners and show positive attitudes in lessons. The needs of the middle ability learners are well catered for and these pupils make the best progress.

- The teaching of phonics in Year 1 has improved so that, for the first time, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in 2016 was in line with the national average.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and towards each other. They are very proud of their school and describe it, justifiably, as having 'a calm and peaceful atmosphere' where 'all of us are good friends'.
- Pupils value the support they receive in their learning, saying that they know they will receive extra help if they need it. They also say that they like being challenged in their work and would appreciate 'harder work', especially in science and mathematics.
- Pupils say, emphatically, that they feel safe at this school. They have confidence in adults' ability to keep them safe and to look after them really well if there were any problems. During a discussion with the lead inspector, pupils reflected sensitively on a few rare instances of poor behaviour and bullying, commenting that matters were dealt with quickly and firmly. Pupils confirmed their awareness of different forms of bullying and said they were taught about how to stay safe online.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities within the school and fulfil their roles very thoughtfully. For example, the 'playground buddies' provide sensitive care and support at breaktimes.
- The school provides outstanding support for specific pupils of all ages who have social and emotional difficulties through its 'Tree House' nurture provision. Leaders have appointed and trained two members of support staff to make sure that the 'Tree House' is open all day, every day, to offer short periods of one-to-one or small-group support for pupils who would otherwise struggle to stay focused in lessons. As a result of this targeted support, pupils are able to return to lessons with renewed focus and motivation to learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Parents and staff, as shown in their survey responses, strongly agree that behaviour at the school is good and that leaders support other staff well in managing behaviour.
- The school is a calm, orderly community where pupils display courtesy and respect for others very naturally throughout the day.
- In their social times, such as lunchtimes and playtimes, pupils enjoy a well-supervised range of activities. They play together well in carefully 'zoned' areas which allow for energetic play and quieter activities, supported effectively by adults and by the 'playtime buddies'.
- The behaviour policy has a system of clear rewards and sanctions. The system is well understood by pupils and, as a result, the school rules are followed and behaviour is

well managed across the school. The headteacher keeps clear records of any behaviour-related incidents and these are reported to governors regularly.

- Occasionally, in lessons, pupils lose focus and their learning slows. This happens when pupils do not understand the given task or when the learning is not well matched to pupils' abilities.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Following the last inspection, pupils' rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics declined. From their starting points, the progress pupils made by the end of key stage 2 was significantly below the national average in each year from 2012 to 2015. During this period, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was close to the national averages but varied from year to year. Disadvantaged pupils made the same slow progress as other pupils.
- In the 2016 national assessments in reading at the end of Year 6, pupils made significantly slower progress than the national average. They made faster progress in mathematics, however, and this resulted in above-average attainment in this subject.
- In response to the slow progress made by pupils in Year 6 in reading in 2016, leaders put a robust plan in place to tackle this weakness throughout the school. The positive impact of their actions on teaching and learning was observed during the inspection. This improving trend is also reflected in the school's current assessment information, where analysis shows that pupils in all year groups are currently making at least as much progress in reading as in other subjects.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make slightly better progress than their older peers, although attainment in reading and mathematics dropped in 2013 and 2014 before the downward trend was reversed.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make good enough progress from their starting points. Expectations for disadvantaged pupils are low. The school's current assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils in Years 2 to 5 make slow progress in all subjects. Some have made no progress since the autumn term. Only in the early years, in Year 1 and in Year 6 are pupils making similar progress to that of their peers nationally.
- The proportion of pupils in this school with special educational needs and/or disabilities is typically small and their achievement at the end of key stage 2 has varied from year to year. In 2016, however, this group of pupils in Year 6 made good progress from their starting points in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Their progress in writing was slower.
- By the end of Year 1, in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics improved so that it was in line with the national figure for the first time. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the standard, however, remained below that of other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not make enough progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. This is because teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging work in these subjects.
- The school's assessment information for current pupils shows an improving picture in

most year groups. Pupils in the current Year 6 have made good progress from the start of the year, as measured by the school's assessment systems.

- Outcomes at the end of the early years foundation stage are consistently good. A higher proportion of children than the national average achieve a good level of development. The vast majority leave the early years area of the school with the skills needed to succeed in key stage 1.

Early years provision

Good

- The quality of teaching is securely good and provision in the early years continues to be a strength of the school.
- Children join the school with knowledge and skill that are typical for their age. They make good progress and their achievement at the end of the Reception Year has been consistently above national figures. Children leave the early years with well-developed skills and are very well prepared for Year 1.
- The children are confident and capable learners; they are very receptive to the activities provided for them. The curriculum matches children's ages and stages of development. Recent changes to the layout of the indoor area have further enhanced the provision, with a seamless flow of movement between activities. Children have access to high-quality activities across all areas of learning in an inviting and well-resourced environment.
- The outdoor area has been carefully planned to create a good mix of 'zones' for learning. As well as providing space for physical activity and child-initiated learning through play, staff make good use of the outdoor area to promote early mathematics and literacy skills. For example, the 'enchanted forest' zone is a covered area where children use pencils, paper and drawing equipment to develop their writing skills.
- The experienced and effective early years leader and her team know the children very well and all adults have high expectations of children's behaviour. As a result, children follow the expected guidelines carefully and well, both inside and in the outdoor area. Children are well cared for and safeguarding is effective.
- The leader deploys other adults well to support pupils of all abilities according to their needs, including those who are disadvantaged. Children's early literacy skills are especially well promoted. The children are confident young writers, as seen in their descriptions of witches with their 'sharp nails' and 'pointed hats'. Many write their names, labels and captions with ease and enthusiasm.
- In conversations with the lead inspector, many parents spoke warmly about the provision for their children, saying that they settle to school exceptionally well. Parents commented that they feel involved in their children's learning. Children and parents enjoy the daily 'bedtime book' they are given, and parents are further involved by contributing to the ongoing 'All About Me' booklets with their children.
- Occasionally, the activities are not demanding enough for the most able children. The early years staff accept that their interactions with the most able children do not always move them on rapidly to more challenging work.

School details

Unique reference number	122589
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10023210

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Jenkinson
Headteacher	Russell Tew
Telephone number	0115 953 6688
Website	www.leenmillsprimary.co.uk/
Email address	office@leenmills.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 September 2012

Information about this school

- Leen Mills Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a before-school club.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups apart from Year 5, as these classes were out of school on an educational visit for the duration of the inspection. A detailed scrutiny of the workbooks of pupils in Year 5 was conducted with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about their school and looked at examples of their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils from Years 1, 2, 4 and 6 read.
- The lead inspector spoke with a wide range of parents informally at the start of the school day and inspectors took account of the 35 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire. No responses were received to the pupil questionnaire.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary, its improvement plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about pupils' current attainment and progress, and other documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Bray	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Nina Bee	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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