

West Lynn Primary School

St Peter's Road, West Lynn, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3JL

Inspection dates

14–15 June 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have eradicated inadequate teaching but have not yet ensured that teaching is consistently good in all classes.
- Leadership of some subjects, including English, is not as effective as others, such as mathematics. As a result, some leaders are not able to identify where teaching is best and where improvements are needed.
- Governors and trustees do not demonstrate clarity about some of their respective responsibilities. In particular, governors were not clear about their role in holding leaders to account for the use of pupil premium funding.

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are making strong progress but this is not the case in all classes.
- Attendance is lower than is the case nationally. Some pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, are absent too frequently. Leaders have not ensured that parents sufficiently recognise the impact of absence, including term-time holidays.
- Children in the early years are not making consistently good progress. Adults do not collect and use information about children's achievements well enough to plan tasks to extend learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are highly committed and ambitious for the school. They have secured many improvements since the inspection of the predecessor school, including improving teaching and the behaviour of pupils.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Leaders have ensured that all staff know and use the school's systems for managing pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and so make good progress.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. A broad range of learning opportunities is provided and pupils are helped to develop into caring and sensible individuals.
- Safeguarding is effective because leaders ensure that all staff are well trained and school systems for identifying and acting upon concerns are used rigorously.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - the best practice evident in some classes is shared more widely
 - pupils have better opportunities to develop their writing skills in different contexts in some classes
 - teachers have equally high expectations of what pupils can achieve within lessons
 - teachers plan lessons which consistently meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Improve the early years provision by ensuring that:
 - teachers take greater account of children's strengths and weaknesses on entry and plan for their individual needs more closely, for example through developing their literacy skills
 - adults collect and use assessments of children's achievements more effectively to plan tasks which will extend and accelerate their learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - clear responsibilities and accountabilities are established between trustees and governors so that leaders are held to account more rigorously for spending decisions, such as the use of funding for disadvantaged pupils
 - all middle leaders are able to secure improvement through accurate knowledge of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning
 - leaders take further action to improve attendance including for pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

It is recommended that an external review of governance 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 successfully eradicated inadequate teaching and continue to provide good support for teachers to help them improve their practice. However, leaders have yet to establish consistently good teaching across all classes. Difficulties in recruiting staff have hampered improvements in teaching.
- Some subjects, such as English, are not led as effectively as others. Checks on the teaching of reading, for example, are not regularly carried out to identify where it is most and least effective so that further improvements can be implemented to improve pupils' progress. By contrast, the leadership of mathematics is effective and leaders are implementing changes which are securing improvements in pupils' basic mathematics skills, their reasoning and their problem-solving.
- Senior leaders are highly ambitious for the school. They work effectively as a team and carefully track the progress of pupils. Together, they plan additional support for those who need it. As a result, the attainment of pupils, while still too low in some classes, is improving.
- Leaders make their high expectations clear to staff. They have established systems and policies which reflect these expectations, including how staff manage behaviour. They have regular staff meetings to reinforce key messages. Leaders support the professional development of staff, including those who are new to the profession, so that they develop their skills. As a result, teaching, while not yet consistently good, has improved since the inspection of the predecessor school, when teaching was judged to be inadequate.
- Behaviour was also judged inadequate in the predecessor school inspection report, and is now good because leaders have ensured that there are clear systems and procedures for managing pupils' behaviour which staff understand and use.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for well because leaders have established a culture of inclusion in the school and additional funding for these pupils is carefully targeted. Pupils, including those who are new to the school, are quickly made welcome and incorporated into the school community because their needs are met well.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately to provide support for pupils' academic and emotional needs. This support is helping some pupils to catch up. However, some disadvantaged pupils, despite this additional support, are still not making the rapid progress needed to reach the expected standard because class teaching is variable.
- A broad curriculum is in place with lots of interesting opportunities for learning in lessons, in clubs and through a wide range of visits. Funding to promote participation in sports is used effectively and pupils enjoy taking part in competitions and events in school and with other schools.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and is a strength of the school. This is because leaders are determined to ensure that pupils develop into caring, well-rounded individuals. Pupils learn about values, including

British values such as tolerance and justice, because these are taught in assemblies and in classes. Pupils live out these values. They are polite and conduct themselves well. They spoke with inspectors about the importance of treating everyone with respect, regardless of their backgrounds.

- The large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those to whom inspectors spoke during the inspection, were highly positive about the improvements that leaders have brought about at the school. One parent commented, 'I believe this school is going from strength to strength. I would highly recommend this school to anyone' and another, 'The executive leadership team is extremely supportive and encourages parental involvement.' A few parents expressed concerns about behaviour at the school, but these concerns were not borne out by inspection evidence.

Governance of the school

- Governors and trustees are highly committed to the school and determined to ensure that it continues to improve. However, there is a lack of clarity about some responsibilities. For example, governors were not clear that they were responsible for holding leaders to account for the use of pupil premium funding. As a result, plans for the use of this funding were not checked thoroughly when presented to governors. Governors discuss the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged regularly but are not using this information to reflect sharply enough on where funding has been used to best effect.
- Governors visit the school often and meet with leaders to discuss the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have confidence in leaders but balance their support with challenge when needed. For example, governors questioned leaders about attendance and steps taken to improve this.
- Trustees support the school well. They regularly monitor the school's performance using assessment information, and also provide school advisers who check on other aspects of the school's work and who provide additional support and challenge for leaders. Trustees regularly commission external evaluation of the school's work from consultants, which helps them maintain a clear perspective on the school's improvement journey.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping pupils safe is central to the work of the school. Because some leaders also work in the two partner schools, leaders have ensured that there are sufficient trained professionals available in school to deal with any concerns whenever they may occur. Leaders have also ensured that their systems for recording concerns and action taken are rigorous and clear so that all of the lead professionals know exactly what has taken place or needs to happen next. Training for staff is regular and effective. Concerns forms completed by staff demonstrate that staff know what to look for that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Action is taken swiftly when needed and leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Checks on staff are

carried out in accordance with requirements and records of these are kept accurately.

- Leaders ensure that pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils spoken to during the inspection demonstrated a high level of awareness about what information they should and should not share when online. Leaders have also helped parents to increase their awareness of possible risks around technologies, and how they can help keep their children safe. Parents' meetings are held and each newsletter includes a tip for parents about safety online which acts as a regular reminder to them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, while strong in places, is not consistently good. In some classes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and so pupils' progress is slower than it should be.
- In some classes, teachers do not use time as effectively as they could and this slows the pace of learning. For example, sometimes teachers allow pupils to discuss for too long when this is not moving their learning on.
- Sometimes, teaching is less effective because tasks are not well planned to make the most of learning. For example, in some classes pupils practise aspects of grammar regularly but are not given sufficient opportunities to learn about how this could be used in different contexts. As a result, pupils do not apply this learning to their own writing.
- In some classes and subjects, such as in mathematics in Year 6, the most able pupils are given challenging tasks which deepen their knowledge and understanding well. However, sometimes the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. For example, in some classes in subjects such as science and history, all pupils complete similar tasks. As a result, the most able pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Pupils develop their writing skills within other subjects inconsistently. In some classes, pupils write about history and science, reinforcing their knowledge of information texts and recounts. In other classes, sheets are provided which restrict pupils' writing and do not enable them to reinforce the writing skills taught in English lessons.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils. In some classes, this is particularly strong, for example in Years 2 and 6. In these classes, pupils are eager to please their teachers. They respond with enthusiasm to teachers' questions and concentrate hard on tasks provided for them. In these classes, pupils make rapid progress in their learning.
- In some classes, teachers make good use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and use misconceptions well to extend learning. For example, in Year 2 when pupils mispronounced a sound in a phonics session, the teacher used this to reinforce the correct pronunciation.
- In some classes, teachers provide good opportunities for developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. For example, pupils respond to questions such as 'Why is this answer incorrect?' This is helping pupils to extend their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Homework is used well to encourage pupils to apply what they have learned in lessons

within a variety of contexts and extend their knowledge. Pupils complete interesting projects at home, for example finding recipes from around the world and making collages about different countries as part of a topic on places.

- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning. They support individual pupils and groups well, asking questions and explaining concepts. In some classes, teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together because teachers make clear to teaching assistants in discussions and planning what pupils should achieve within each lesson and how to support them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. They are keen to talk about their learning with adults and with each other. This is because adults provide lots of opportunities for discussion during lessons.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs met well. They are supported in class and through small-group support because adults are all aware of their individual needs and know how best to meet these.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards learning, such as resilience when faced with a tricky problem in mathematics. They are given challenges at different levels and encouraged to choose the one that will extend their learning. Pupils told inspectors that this is a school where 'It's good to make mistakes; that's how you learn.'
- Pupils say that school is a safe place and are confident that an adult will help them if they have a problem or worry. The majority of parents agreed that their child is safe in school. Pupils know what bullying is because this is taught regularly. They say that bullying is rare in school. One pupil summed up the views of others spoken to by inspectors, saying, 'There are occasional fall-outs, but nothing serious.'
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils develop their social skills, for example through taking part in inter-school competitions and events. They are given opportunities to develop their creative skills through art projects and performing plays. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths in lessons and told inspectors that 'we are all unique'. Pupils take part in a wide range of community and church events, such as Remembrance Sunday, and dance events. They learn about responsibility, for example through becoming road safety ambassadors and school councillors.
- In some lessons, where teaching is less effective, pupils do not concentrate on their work as well as they should because they do not know exactly what is expected of them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. In classes, pupils are cooperative and respectful. They hold doors open for adults and for each other. Pupils told inspectors that playtimes are happy times. At lunchtimes, pupils enjoy playing together and socialising. For example, during the inspection, pupils were enjoying eating their packed lunches outside, requiring little adult intervention because everyone behaved very sensibly.
- Pupils who have behavioural difficulties are well managed and rarely disrupt learning. This is because adults know pupils well. They establish good relationships with them and good support is provided when needed for individuals.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and leaders have put in place rewards for good attendance such as extra playtime. However, attendance remains below that found nationally and the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is too low. Leaders are rightly concerned about some pupils' attendance and are working closely with attendance officers and with parents to reduce absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was much lower than was found nationally and progress in mathematics and reading was also low. Leaders explained that this cohort included a relatively high number of pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities who made progress but did not achieve the expected standard. They also acknowledged that many of these pupils suffered from previously weak teaching and so had much ground to make up in their learning.
- Current Year 6 pupils are making good progress from their starting points. As a result, leaders expect outcomes for this group to be in line with national averages. Inspection evidence, including work in pupils' books, indicates that standards for most pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are at least those expected and for some are higher than this.
- Outcomes in Year 2 for reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 were lower than that found nationally. However, current Year 2 pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- In other year groups, progress and attainment are variable overall and the progress of different groups of pupils also varies. For example, in some classes the least able are making good progress and the most able less progress than they should. In other classes, the opposite is true. Where the proportion of pupils at the standard expected for their age is low, not all pupils are making the progress expected of them. In some classes, too few pupils are making the faster progress that is needed for them to reach the standard expected.
- In Year 1 in 2016, the proportion of pupils that met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above that found nationally. However, leaders are aware that fewer of the current pupils in Year 1 are on track to reach this standard. This is because the teaching of phonics has not been as strong as in the previous year. Leaders have identified this and taken steps which are improving matters.

- In English and mathematics, greater challenge has been provided for the most able pupils, especially in Years 2 and 6. As a result, some pupils have made rapid progress and more pupils are now working above the expected standard in these year groups than was the case previously.
- In subjects such as science and history, the most able pupils in some classes are not challenged sufficiently because teachers do not provide tasks to extend them. As a result, in some classes these pupils are not making as much progress as they could.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is variable. In some classes, disadvantaged pupils including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making rapid progress. However, some disadvantaged pupils are making slower progress because teaching is not as well matched to their individual needs.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because leaders carefully identify individual needs and check that the support provided for pupils is proving effective.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2016 was above that found nationally. However, leaders are aware that a lower proportion of children who are currently in Reception will reach the standard this year. This is partly because a number of children joined the class mid-year and also because the progress of children in the early years is not consistently good. For example, only half of those children who started in the Reception class with skills well below those typical for their age are making good progress. Consequently, some children are not well prepared to start in Year 1.
- Children's learning journeys demonstrate that children enjoy a good range of learning activities. However, adults do not collect and use assessments of children's achievements well enough to plan tasks which will extend and accelerate their learning.
- Adults know that a weaker area for some children when they start school is their literacy skills. Despite this, they do not plan enough regular opportunities to develop these skills within other areas of learning. The learning environment is attractive and well resourced. Children have a good range of activities inside and outside such as the mud kitchen, sand play and role play.
- Adults often support children well. For example, an adult helped a child at an early stage of learning English to understand by using technology. Most adults intervene in children's play well. Sometimes, however, adults do not intervene to develop children's skills, such as their knowledge of the direction of reading in English.
- Children are kept safe in the Reception class. Adults are careful to make sure that the environment is well managed and that children know the rules of the classroom.
- Children behave well in the early years. They are cooperative and sensible. They share resources well and are keen to talk with adults and with each other.
- Leaders have developed positive relationships with parents so that they support their child's learning. Home visits are carried out prior to children starting school. Parents are regularly invited to contribute to children's learning journals and to come in to find

out about aspects of the curriculum such as phonics. Good links are made with feeder nurseries so that transition into school is smooth.

School details

Unique reference number	141168
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10031333

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	The West Norfolk Academy Trust
Chair	David Marsh
Executive Headteacher	Joanne Borley
Telephone number	01553 772330
Website	www.westlynn.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@westlynn.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is part of a multi-academy trust and shares its headteacher, deputy headteacher and leader for special educational needs with two other schools within the trust.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum standard expected for pupils at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is a smaller school than is found on average nationally.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above

that found nationally.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are supported by an education, health and care plan, or statement of special educational needs, is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents.
- Inspectors spoke with a small number of parents, took account of 43 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and met with some pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors listened to a small number of pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke with three members of the governing body, one of whom is also a trustee, with three members of the academy trust and with some subject leaders.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff.

Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lyn Beale

Ofsted Inspector

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