

# Leiston Primary School

King George's Avenue, Leiston, Suffolk IP16 4JQ

## Inspection dates

30 November–1 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Working closely with the trust, the head of school has effectively established a culture of high expectations across the school.
- Teachers now demand more from pupils and pupils respond with enthusiasm and energy.
- Pupils of all abilities are making good progress as a result of good teaching and effective support from teaching assistants.
- Standards are improving rapidly because the work that pupils are given is well matched to their learning needs. However, more needs to be done to raise standards of work further.
- Pupils develop technical skills well in reading, such as using phonics to sound out words.
- A new programme to develop pupils' ability to analyse books and gain deeper understanding when reading is having a very positive impact. However, the approach is not fully established.
- Pupils' writing in English is developing well and by Year 6, writing is often of high quality. However, pupils are not practising their writing skills enough in other subjects.
- Children in the early years get a good start to their education and most are making good progress. However, some, especially boys, are rushed too quickly to write in books before they are ready to do so.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. In lessons, they are often totally absorbed in their work. Pupils have a strong understanding of how well they are doing.
- Staff look after pupils well and members of the welfare team provide excellent support to the pupils and families they work with.
- The curriculum has been carefully designed around pupils' prior learning, what they need to learn next and any gaps they may have in their wider understanding of the world.
- The curriculum provides rich opportunities for learning both in and out of school. It promotes good discussion and develops pupils' ideas well, including their ability to think through problems across many subjects.
- Pupils are not consistently asked to talk about how they solved problems in mathematics.
- The trust provides strong support, particularly to establish effective leadership at all levels. This includes supporting some leaders who are still developing their roles.
- Training for staff is of high quality and draws from the best practice across the trust's schools.
- Governors provide good oversight of the school's work and hold school leaders to account for its performance.

## Full report

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

- Raise standards further by ensuring that:
  - pupils have good opportunities to develop and improve their writing skills in subjects other than English and that teachers ensure that the quality of writing is the same as in English
  - the new guided reading programme is refined and developed further so that it makes an even stronger contribution to the development of pupils' comprehension skills and is applied consistently across the school
  - children in the early years, especially boys, are given enough time to develop their skills in writing through practical work and activities before being expected to write in books
  - pupils are more routinely asked to explain their reasoning, how they worked out problems and the methods they used in mathematics.
- Improve leadership by ensuring that all leaders are:
  - equally confident in managing and using assessment information to inform their work
  - proactive in driving forward improvements in their areas, with less dependency on help from trust leaders and the head of school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The head of school has established good team work among staff and a clear sense of purpose, which staff understand and subscribe to. Consequently, teaching staff have high expectations of pupils' work.
- Leaders successfully promote an ethos that is positive and within which pupils feel they are valued and that they belong, whatever their background.
- The trust is visibly involved in the work of the school. Trust leaders are regularly in school to model best practice and to help promote key improvements in the quality of education provided.
- Leaders of English and mathematics are effective in reviewing how well their subjects are being taught and how well different groups of pupils are progressing. Leaders in other subject areas are developing their roles well, particularly those who are new to their roles.
- Nonetheless, not all leaders are equally confident in using assessment information to inform their plans for improvement. Some still require support from the trust or the head of school to ensure that they are effective in promoting improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders have acted swiftly to develop new approaches to teaching comprehension skills through guided reading, in order to raise pupils' attainment in reading and improve their performance in tests at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- School leaders know that further refinement and development are needed as the teaching of guided reading is not yet consistently effective. Nonetheless, pupils are not only reading better quality literature, and more of it, but they are enjoying it immensely. Pupils talk about how much their reading is improving making comments such as: 'I'm much better at using expression when I read now.'
- The programme of training, coaching and mentoring is very effective in helping staff to maintain and further improve their skills and practice. Hence, teaching and learning are good and continue to improve.
- The trust and the head of school have a good understanding of how good the school is. They are accurate in their analysis of information from the regular checks of teaching and learning that they make, and the assessment information they gather.
- The curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to develop their learning across a wide range of subjects. Pupils talk excitedly about the number of trips and visits and the extremely wide range of clubs before school, at lunchtime and after school.
- The sport premium funding is used effectively to provide good physical education opportunities in lessons, as well as extra-curricular sporting activities. The funding is having a positive impact on pupils' health and fitness.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils, as well as supporting their personal development, behaviour and attendance. Hence, there is little difference in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and

others. Indeed, sometimes, disadvantaged pupils outperform others in the school.

- The funding for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is also used effectively and ensures that these pupils make good progress. Support staff are trained well and work effectively with class teachers to help these pupils. However, the SEN report on the school's website is incomplete.
- The school has worked very actively to promote better relationships with parents and engage them in its work, as well as helping them to support their children's learning. For example, during the inspection, the school held a well-attended session, 'Tea Toast and Tips', for parents, on helping their child with work in mathematics.
- Most parents are very positive about the school's work. They are happy with how well it looks after their children and supports their learning.

### **Governance of the school**

- Members of the local governing body are actively involved in the school's work. They visit regularly to see how the policies they have put in place are being implemented.
- The new chair of governors is already reviewing the work of governors to ensure that this makes a difference and 'adds value' to the work of the school.
- Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met and oversee school performance. They have a secure grasp of how well the school is doing currently and what needs to improve further.
- Governors undertake training routinely, including training on safeguarding, so that they have a clear understanding of their roles and how to carry these out.
- The chair of governors is appropriately involved in reviewing the performance of the head of school undertaken by the trust.
- The school's website is being updated but, currently, the funding agreement is not accessible on the site.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained and, consequently, they are vigilant and report any concerns, no matter how minor, to the welfare team. This enables the team, and the designated safeguarding lead, to identify any patterns that emerge over time, which might otherwise get missed.
- Records are comprehensive and thorough. They are very well kept, reviewed and evaluated.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and about how to identify and manage risks to personal safety. This includes understanding how they use the internet and, in particular, the dangers of using social media.
- The school follows rigorous procedures when recruiting new staff, volunteers or governors to make sure that no adult who is unsuitable to work with children is able to gain access to the school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are improving rapidly as a result of the work that the trust and school leaders are doing. Consequently, pupils are being taught well.
- Teachers assess how well pupils are learning very effectively to plan the learning for the next day. Hence, pupils are building well on the previous day's work. Those who did not securely grasp key points or ideas are able to go over the work again and consolidate their learning, while others are moved on.
- Routine use of practical equipment and practical approaches to learning help pupils across the school to understand ideas that might otherwise be more difficult to grasp. This is especially helpful for lower-attaining pupils or those who are finding a particular element of learning difficult. What this means is that teachers have thought hard about how to enable all groups to access the same learning as others, rather than providing superficial or low-level tasks for those who are less confident.
- Because teachers know and understand how well their pupils are progressing, they plan effectively for the needs of those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Support staff are deployed well and they work effectively in lessons with small groups and individual pupils to help them with their learning.
- Support staff also teach effectively by themselves when leading groups such as for phonics. Consequently, they contribute well to pupils' learning and progress.
- Teachers and support staff ask probing questions to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in greater depth. They also use questioning well to check on how well pupils have understood key learning points or instructions on what to do next.
- In most lessons, the most able pupils are challenged well by the work they are given. Often, and especially in mathematics, work is set at three or more levels of difficulty with plenty of scope for the most able to be kept on their toes. Pupils rarely find work too easy.
- Pupils are taught to read effectively. Guided reading work is being used well to enable pupils to think more deeply about the books and texts they are reading and to develop their skills in analysing characters and plots. In Year 6, pupils reading 'The Highwayman' relished the challenge this book provided but were also enjoying unpicking the use of complex language and vocabulary new to them.
- In mathematics, teachers are now skilled in teaching pupils new methods and enabling them to hone their skills in completing a wide range of calculations. Many teachers are asking pupils to explain their thinking when they are solving problems. However, this is not established as routine in all classes.
- Writing skills are taught well in English and pupils now routinely edit and refine their writing to produce polished pieces of work. These are especially good by the time pupils are in Year 6. However, teachers do not ensure that the writing skills developed in English are consistently applied in written work in other subjects, or that pupils have enough opportunities to practise and develop their writing further in other subjects.
- Teachers are effective in enabling pupils to think about, and discuss, a wide range of questions related to different areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils are developing

good understanding across a broad range of subjects.

- The good teaching and interesting activities pupils are given in lessons result in high levels of engagement and enjoyment from all groups of pupils.
- One of the strengths in learning is the extent to which pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. They talk knowledgeably about the work they are doing, why they are doing it and what they are expected to learn as a result.
- Pupils routinely correct or amend their work to make it better based on the guidance their teachers have given them. This makes a strong contribution to their progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are developing highly positive attitudes to learning and enjoy being challenged to think hard. They are keen to do their best and to achieve well.
- The high quality of presentation and the care pupils take of their books show how proud they are of their work. They are equally proud of their school.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the work of the school and take on responsibilities. These include representing their class on the learning council or welcoming visitors to their class and explaining the work they are doing.
- Pupils socialise well with one another, for example enjoying social interactions over lunch. They are respectful towards others and very tolerant and understanding if one of their classmates is 'having a bad day'.
- Pupils appreciate the range of different backgrounds represented within the school and willingly work with one another. Their ability to work with different pupils is particularly noticeable because the groups they are in change daily depending on their learning the previous day. Pupils handle these changes well, demonstrating their adaptability.
- Discussions with a wide range of pupils show that they are reflective and thoughtful. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are confident and mature and well prepared for their next stage of education.
- The welfare team plays a vital and highly effective role in supporting pupils and families in difficult or challenging situations. Members of the team have been a key force in reducing absence, including persistent absence in the school.
- Attendance was in line with national averages last academic year, a good improvement from the year before. Currently, attendance is slightly above average and has improved for all groups.
- Persistent absence has also been reduced as a result of the rigorous and comprehensive approach taken by the school. However, despite doing everything that the welfare team can, there are still a few families who are reticent in sending their children to school regularly. The welfare team continues to work closely with these

families.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils, staff and governors agree that behaviour has improved significantly over the last couple of years. The rate of exclusions has been reduced considerably, so that it is now rare for a pupil to be excluded for a fixed period of time.
- Leaders monitor and check behaviour thoroughly so that they can identify quickly any patterns or issues in behaviour.
- Pupils understand the behaviour expectations and know the consequences for bad behaviour but, more importantly, understand why these are needed.
- The school has worked effectively with pupils to develop their understanding of issues such as bullying and what constitutes bullying. Pupils feel that bullying is rare, but if it does occur, they are confident that the adults in the school will deal with it effectively.
- The welfare team works with individual pupils and families to address any behaviour issues and provides the support that any pupil needs to manage his/her behaviour better.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- From low starting points, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Improved teaching and a much better curriculum have led to improvements in the progress pupils are making and the standards they are attaining.
- While progress is good, the attainment of pupils is lower. It is rising rapidly, but the school acknowledges there is more to do to address some current gaps in learning. These gaps result from a range of factors, including lower starting points than is typical nationally, poor teaching in the past, for older pupils especially, and pupils joining the school part way through primary education, sometimes with very low prior attainment.
- Results of national assessments and tests at the end of key stage 2 show a rising trend over the past couple of years. In 2017, most pupils made expected or better progress though a few did far less well, skewing overall results to some extent. Key stage 1 results indicated steady progress from the end of the early years but standards were below those nationally.
- The school's best performance in key stage 2 was in mathematics, where the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard and the proportion gaining the higher standard was close to the national average.
- Pupils in the school are making good progress in mathematics and are especially skilled in performing calculations quickly and accurately. They are developing their skills in reasoning and being able to explain their thinking but this is not wholly consistent.
- Results in reading at the end of key stage 2 were lower than in writing and mathematics, though an improvement on those of the year before.
- The school has addressed the lower performance in reading in the past by developing a

much more effective approach to teaching reading, and by enabling pupils to tackle more challenging books and reading material. As a result, the standard of pupils' reading in the school is improving rapidly.

- Most pupils in Year 6, for example, are tackling 'The Highwayman' well and discuss the plot and characters with confidence. Pupils across key stage 2 say that their vocabulary and grammar have improved as a result of the books they are reading now. They feel, rightly, that their writing is better as a result, as they are using newly learned vocabulary when writing.
- While the standards of comprehension are improving at a good rate, the new programme in place is not yet fully effective. It is still being shaped and refined to meet pupils' needs even more tightly. Nonetheless, it has had a positive impact. Across both key stages 1 and 2, pupils are making good, if not rapid, progress in developing deeper skills in analysing the texts they are reading, and widening their vocabulary and their experiences of different genres.
- Most pupils meet the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1. Pupils currently in the school make good use of their phonic knowledge to help them to read words they are not familiar with and to help work out how to spell words when writing.
- English lessons and pupils' written work in English show that pupils are making good progress in writing. Spelling and use of a wider range of vocabulary are improving well. Pupils write increasingly in extended form. By Year 6, many pupils are producing high-quality writing and none that is of low quality.
- However, some pupils, especially boys, still find it physically difficult to write and their handwriting is not well formed. They are not given enough time to practise and develop their writing in other subjects.
- The most able pupils make good progress as they are challenged and extended well in lessons. In the 2017 key stage 2 national curriculum tests, the most able pupils performed well, with a good proportion attaining the higher standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils within the school are making good progress from their starting points. The most able disadvantaged pupils are working at greater depth alongside other most-able pupils. In national curriculum assessments and tests, disadvantaged pupils often outperform others in the school. As with others in the school, however, there is more work to do to raise standards so that they match national averages.
- Low-attaining pupils and those with SEN and/or disabilities are given very good support for what are often complex and wide-ranging needs. They improve their work well as a result.
- Pupils are making good progress in other subjects. The tasks and activities provided help pupils to develop skills, such as enquiry skills and their ability to investigate ideas. In science, for example, when learning about forces and gravity, pupils considered why Mary Poppins could not have used an umbrella to arrive at her new employer's house. They could explain this using their newly acquired knowledge of air resistance and gravitational force.

## Early years provision

Good

- Children are making good progress in the early years as a result of the good provision. Well-organised practical activities stimulate their interest and engage them very effectively in their learning.
- Children begin in Nursery with skills and understanding that are, overall, below what is typical for their ages. Not all children join the school in Nursery. A significant number join at the start of Reception where, again, overall starting points are lower than age-related expectations.
- In 2017, by the end of Reception, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development was in line with the proportion nationally. These results indicate strong progress from children's starting points.
- Adults working with children provide good role models for them and show them how to use the activities and, for example, how to read with expression. Adults ask useful questions to stimulate children's thinking.
- Most of the work is tailored well to meet the needs of different ability groups, so that the most able are extended and the least able are supported effectively.
- The early years staff focus well on developing children's language to extend this and widen the vocabulary children use. They also help to develop children's early reading through very well-delivered phonics sessions.
- While there are opportunities for promoting children's writing, these are not as well developed as learning in other areas. Observations and discussions with leaders indicate that sometimes boys are rushed into writing in books before they are ready. Some find this difficult because they have not yet developed the hand strength or the skill in manipulating a pen or pencil and need to practise these skills more.
- School leaders provide good support to the early years and the early years leader, so that the work in the Nursery and Reception is well managed and improvements effectively promoted.
- The areas are safe for children, who are well cared for and looked after. Good attention is paid to children's personal and social development, so that they engage well with learning, work happily with others sharing resources and equipment and readily talk about what they are learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the outdoor areas are well developed and provide children with a wide range of activities to support their learning. Even when the weather is not good, the outdoor areas are used effectively. For example, when it was raining, adults worked with children to find ways of collecting water falling from the roof and guiding it into various containers by joining sections of drain pipes together. All were having fun while solving a very real problem.
- Learning journeys and other written or recorded work provide a useful record of what children have been doing. However, the notes alongside the photographic evidence in the learning journeys do not always provide enough information about what children have learned.
- The early years staff have developed good relationships with parents and provide them

with a warm welcome.

- Overall, children are prepared well for Year 1 by the end of Reception.

## School details

Unique reference number	141554
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10037625

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lesley Cassie
Head of school	Melissa Geater
Telephone number	01728 830 745
Website	<a href="http://www.leistonprimary.org.uk">www.leistonprimary.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:leiston.admin@avocetacademy.org">leiston.admin@avocetacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Information about this school

- The school does not fully meet requirements on the publication of information required in the SEN report on its website.
- The school does not fully comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the funding agreement. While the website has a link to the funding agreement, this does not work.
- Leiston Primary School converted to become an academy school in November 2014. It is a founding member of the Avocet Academy Trust established at that time. Two of the other schools that founded the trust had been working with Leiston Primary School prior to this date. When its predecessor school, also named Leiston Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2012 it was judged to be good.
- The head of school began her role here at the start of the last academic year.
- The school is larger in size compared with other primary schools nationally.

- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. About 9% are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. An above average proportion have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all classes. A number of these observations were conducted jointly with the head of school or another member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the head of school, other members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders. They also met with two governors, including the chair of governors and a member of the governing body who was the previous chair. The lead inspector held discussions with the chief executive of the trust.
- Members of the inspection team spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school, as well as holding discussions with representative groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to a number of pupils reading, to check how well they were developing their reading skills.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspection team was unable to take account of parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, 'Parent View', as too few parents shared their views. The team did look at written responses from eight parents and a recently completed survey of parents carried out by the school.
- A member of the team spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school and also with a number of parents who attended the 'Tea, Toast and Tips' session.
- Members of the team observed the work of the school. They looked at the school's improvement plan, a range of policies and procedures, documents relating to the work of the governing body and the arrangements for ensuring that pupils are safeguarded. Documentation reviewed included records of assessment information relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance. The school's website was also checked.

## Inspection team

Gulshan Kayembe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector
Rachael Judd	Ofsted Inspector

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