

Ley Hill School

Ley Hill, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 1YF

Inspection dates

8–10 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have kept this school moving in the right direction since the previous inspection. They know the school well. While rightly proud of its strengths, leaders and staff constantly reflect, discuss and debate ways to make the school even better.
- Governance is effective. The committed governing body understands its principle roles and provides school leaders with both support and challenge.
- The headteacher's determined pursuit of his clear long-term vision has resulted in pupils' outstanding personal development and behaviour. Pupils develop very effective learning skills, especially as they move through key stage 2.
- Pupils make good progress overall. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and their progress also particularly accelerates as they move through key stage 2.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The effective early years provision lays firm foundations for children's future progress. Nursery children, in particular, thrive in the enticing and exciting environment. Reception Year prepares children very well for Year 1.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall. By the end of Year 6, more pupils than seen nationally reach higher standards or work at greater depth. However, they could do even better, particularly in Reception Year and key stage 1.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Adults' use of strong subject knowledge and skilful questioning to promote pupils' learning are key features of its success.
- Leaders and teachers work closely together to refine teaching wherever it is not yet the best that it can be.
- Subject leaders are excellent ambassadors for their subjects. Some are new to the role and have not yet had the opportunity to impact fully on securing the best possible teaching and outcomes in their subjects.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They find learning exciting and enjoyable. They do well in a range of subjects, including art, music, design and technology, physical education and science.
- Pupils feel safe in the highly nurturing environment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that the most able pupils do the best they possibly can across the school, especially in Reception Year and key stage 1.
- Strengthen the role of subject leaders so that they can play a full part in helping senior leaders to secure outstanding teaching and outcomes across a wide range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have created a strong and united team. Morale is high. Intelligent and reflective debate and mutual challenge among leaders and staff ensure that improvements are made securely and are not tokenistic. Staff feel that their voice is heard and understand the important contribution they make to securing improvements. Those that worked at the school at the time of the previous inspection unanimously agreed that the school is a lot better now than it was then.
- Leaders use a variety of ways to evaluate the quality of teaching thoroughly and diagnose ways to improve it. Staff are receptive and eager to hear ways that they can refine their practice. Leaders have established a culture where staff feel trusted but responsible to teach as well as they can. Continuing professional development is carefully targeted, including the purposeful use of staff meetings.
- Leaders check outcomes for different groups of pupils carefully, but wisely treat this sort of analysis of very small groups cautiously. Leaders take considerable care to ensure that their assessment information is accurate and reliable, inviting professional challenge by comparing work and assessments with other schools.
- The use of additional sports funding to enhance the school's promotion of health and physical education is very effective. Spending has contributed to specialist coaching, additional equipment and further professional development for staff. Pupils and parents overwhelmingly agree that the school encourages pupils to take regular exercise and participate in sport. All pupils attend at least one sports festival during the year.
- Strong and principled leadership of provision for the few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities means that these pupils get the support they need to make progress in line with other pupils with similar starting points. Where possible, individual targets for these pupils are precise, measurable and regularly reviewed. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with parents and seeks advice from other professionals where necessary.
- Subject leaders are passionate and enthusiastic about their subjects. Those that are new to these roles benefit from working alongside others with more experience, but have a clear view of how they want to improve their subject areas. They are very proactive in accessing additional training, making links with leaders from other schools and passing on what they learn to other teachers. For some, their role in promoting improvement through observations of teaching and learning is at an earlier stage of development.
- The school's rich and varied curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. There is a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs. Parents and pupils alike value and praise the choices and experiences on offer, enthusing how this contributes to pupils' 'love' of school. The promotion of fundamental British values is threaded through the school's work. Although some pupils may not recognise these explicit terms at first, they understand and engage thoughtfully in discussions about the concepts that underpin them.
- The local authority is supportive of the school, but only provides very light-touch

support. It is correct in its belief that school leaders are on top of any issues and moving the school forward.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is effective. Governors are committed to and rightly proud of the school.
- The headteacher furnishes governors with comprehensive information about how the school is doing. He is open and frank with them about any areas which are less positive. In addition, governors make use of external data to challenge and validate school leaders' evaluations of the school's performance.
- The governing body fulfils its role well because its focus and approach is appropriately strategic. For example, governors question leaders to refine their evaluations of the school's performance, or challenge the way that leaders present information about pupils' outcomes to secure an accurate picture.
- Governors are not unduly swayed by headline performance measures alone, but probe into how well different groups are doing across the school. They provide effective challenge for the headteacher. There is clear evidence in governing body minutes of governors checking the rationale for leaders' decisions and the differences they have made, taking financial considerations into account. The very small allocation of additional funding for targeted pupils is used carefully alongside the rest of the budget to improve pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The caring culture established among staff and pupils creates a climate where concerns can be identified and reported. Staff know possible signs of abuse to look out for and use school systems for passing on concerns. Leaders act on information in a timely manner.
- The culture is one where safeguarding training, procedures and protocols are regularly reviewed and refreshed. Important records are kept in an organised manner. This documentation shows that leaders work closely with other professionals and agencies for the protection of children. Leaders demonstrate a tenacity and willingness to challenge other professionals in the best interests of individual pupils.
- All checks on the suitability of staff are carried out and recorded systematically on the single central register.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, well-defined learning routines underpin the productive and industrious learning atmosphere. Pupils are comfortable and familiar with these routines and expectations, so no time is wasted.
- Teachers' expectations are typically high. They demand the precise use of mathematical or scientific vocabulary or the correct grammatical terminology which

challenges all, including most-able pupils.

- Adults' subject knowledge is strong. They use this to good effect so that learning makes sense for pupils. Pupils draw readily on a range of prior knowledge and understanding, and learn to make useful links between subjects. Adults are adept at identifying and addressing pupils' misconceptions.
- Both for teachers and teaching assistants, their secure subject knowledge is complemented by well-developed questioning skills. They draw on a wide variety of well-chosen questions, for example to check understanding or probe a deeper grasp of a concept, including for the most able.
- Teachers capitalise on pupils' strong oral skills to promote learning through discussion. Pupils are used to thinking hard about the answers to questions and offer articulate, thoughtful and often extended answers. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' responses and prompt them to reflect on their answers or be more precise, as necessary.
- Pupils are highly focused and enthused by their learning. Teachers make effective use of resources to bring learning to life. They brief and deploy teaching assistants well so that they are enabled to provide useful support. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are successfully included, participating and learning well in lessons. Teaching assistants allow them independence by moving away to support other pupils too.
- Teachers are conscious of and reflective in finding different ways to challenge most-able pupils and ensure that they fulfil their potential. These pupils are increasingly consistently stretched as they move through key stage 2. Leaders and teachers have identified correctly that there is more work to do to ensure that pupils at key stage 1 also work more consistently at the depth of which they are capable.
- Leaders work closely with teachers to identify individual areas to refine and improve their practice in the shared drive to promote the best possible pupil outcomes over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- 'The school seems to have a positive focus on the children's well-being and development which goes beyond academic learning,' was how one parent put it. The sentiment expressed is typical of the views of many. Parents and staff repeatedly used the word 'nurturing' to describe different aspects of the school's work.
- Pupils are polite, friendly, confident, keen to chat and proud of their school. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to be independent and take on responsibilities, contributing well to their strongly developing social skills and resilience. Pupils like that they have a strong voice in the school and have a secure understanding of equality and respect.
- Lunch and breaktimes are very positive, well-supervised occasions. Pupils mix and play extremely well together. There is a strong sense of trust between pupils and staff. Lunchtime staff are sensitive, form good relationships with pupils and demonstrate that

they care.

- Securing the best possible personal development, attitudes and behaviour has been central to the headteacher's ambitious vision for pupils in the ultimate drive to secure the best academic outcomes.
- Pupils are routinely highly enthused by their learning. They enjoy working together and have very well developed collaborative skills. High levels of mutual respect are evident. Pupils discuss and debate their ideas maturely. Consequently, their conversations in lessons are productive because they challenge their thinking, sometimes leading them to identify their own misconceptions.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Pupils in the role of junior road safety officers help ensure safety around the school grounds.
- Taking account of the range of inspection evidence, bullying is extremely rare. Pupils feel well cared for and are extremely confident that staff encourage them to be friendly to other pupils. They know that there is always an adult in school that they can talk to if something is worrying them. Although many say that they are not aware of any bullying, those that are, feel confident that teachers resolve any rare issues effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils report that positive behaviour is the norm. Parents and staff agree, and school records support their view.
- There is real depth to pupils' understanding of behaviour. They learn to be increasingly conscious and aware of the impact that their behaviour can have on others' learning. Pupils' strongly developing learning skills and attitudes provide firm foundations for their accelerating progress, particularly as they move through key stage 2.
- Role-modelled by the headteacher, leaders and staff are highly successful in their work to improve the behaviour and attitudes of pupils with particular needs. Staff feel strongly supported by leaders in managing behaviour to sustain the highly positive learning atmosphere.
- Pupils attend school regularly. A number of parents described how their children 'love coming to school every day', or made similar comments. Overall attendance is consistently above national figures. Leaders respond on a case-by-case basis where the attendance of any individual gives cause for concern. The needs of the individual child remain paramount when supporting pupils facing difficult circumstances. With such small groups, individual attendance can impact heavily on overall school figures, skewing figures so significantly that they no longer reliably show an accurate picture.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress during their time at Ley Hill. Children get off to a particularly strong start in the Nursery. Pupils' progress also especially accelerates through key stage 2, so that it is significantly above that of other pupils nationally by the time they leave.

- Pupils are very well prepared for their secondary education. As well as excellent personal and learning skills, a much higher proportion than seen nationally reaches at least expected standards academically, including in each of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders use assessment information well to target additional support and help those that have fallen behind expected levels to catch up again quickly. Current assessment information shows that the large majority of pupils across the school are on track for at least expected levels.
- From a young age, children learn how to use phonics to read and spell. They do so with confidence and accuracy. Results from the Year 1 phonics screening check are at least broadly average over time and exceed national figures consistently by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils learn to read expressively. Reading has a high profile across the school and is valued by pupils and staff alike. Most-able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities engage in detailed discussions about the wide range of high-quality texts that they read. Older pupils explore the issues that this generates, such as gender stereotyping, with maturity.
- Pupils' skills develop well across a range of subjects, including art, design and technology, and history. Firm foundations for pupils' science knowledge and understanding are laid in the early years and key stage 1. In key stage 2, pupils deepen their understanding through designing and carrying out their own scientifically accurate tests.
- The few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make similar progress as other pupils who have the same starting points.
- The most able pupils achieve well overall. By the time that they leave, the proportion reaching high standards or working at greater depth is well above national figures. The development of highly positive learning behaviours and their accelerating progress across key stage 2 underpin this success. Outcomes for most-able pupils by the end of key stage 1 are slightly less positive compared with others nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has a strong understanding of how young children learn well. As the teacher, she uses this to particularly good effect in the Nursery. From their varying starting points, children's progress is tracked meticulously through the early years and into key stage 1.
- Throughout the early years, the environment is bright, vibrant and well organised. It is particularly enticing and stimulating in the Nursery, where the learning and challenge created by the activities provided promote children's learning extremely well. The Nursery outdoor environment is exceptionally rich, with enticing and imaginative activities keeping children purposefully engaged.
- In both Nursery and Reception, children mix well, learn to sustain their attention and are confident and eager to share what they are doing. Questioning from adults prompts children to think about their play. Adult interactions also sometimes extend and move children's learning on as they play, particularly in the Nursery.

- Staff manage the varying behaviour needs of children well. Routines are well established and transitions between activities are smooth. Children's happy, confident engagement indicates that they feel safe. Welfare requirements, such as paediatric first aid arrangements, are in place and the environment is well maintained and secure.
- Children make good progress developing their early writing skills. Approximately halfway through Reception Year, the most able children are already writing several simple but accurate sentences with elements of description and using phonetically plausible spellings.
- By the end of Reception Year, children are very well prepared for Year 1. Reception children demonstrate focus and enjoyment during carpet sessions. Questioning is sometimes used well to challenge the most able children, for example to promote the development of early inference skills. Laying the foundations for learning further up the school, children are asked to draw on their prior learning, for example about celebrations in other countries.
- Parents are very involved in the start of their children's schooling. Staff are proactive in building strong relationships with parents using a variety of strategies.
- Leaders and teachers seek timely advice from other professionals, such as speech and language therapists or occupational therapists, where necessary, to support children with particular needs. Additional individual or small-group help, for example focusing on social, emotional, communication and language difficulties, meets children's needs well.
- Although effective leadership has secured good-quality provision overall, the impact on strengthening provision has been greater in Nursery than in Reception. The quality of the environment and adult interaction in Reception Year does not ensure that the children are consistently well challenged to achieve the best possible outcomes, particularly the most able.

School details

Unique reference number	110243
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10024624

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eleanor Garth
Headteacher	Nigel Hoff
Telephone number	01494 784205
Website	www.leyhillschool.org.uk/
Email address	office@leyhill.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is broadly average in size compared with other primary schools.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils on roll, with none in the majority of classes.
- Very few pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion overall is much lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set out minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The on-site after-school childcare provision is run by a private provider and was not part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as a short inspection led by an Ofsted Inspector. The inspection converted to a full inspection so that more evidence could be gathered. As part of routine procedures, one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors led the second and third days of the inspection. A handover meeting was held involving both lead inspectors and the school’s senior leaders. Two further Ofsted Inspectors joined the team on the final day.
- Inspectors visited all classrooms at least once to gather a wide range of evidence about what it is like to be a pupil at the school. Many of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- A mix of formal and informal discussions were held with the headteacher, other school leaders, staff, pupils, parents, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of pupils’ work and heard some of them read.
- The inspection was informed by 60 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, as well as 59 questionnaires completed by pupils and 17 by staff. All written comments that were added to these were considered alongside other inspection evidence.
- The inspection team observed the work of the school and reviewed a range of documentation, including: leaders’ own evaluations of the school’s effectiveness; information about the progress and attainment of current pupils; meeting minutes and papers relating to the work of the governing body; and safeguarding paperwork.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Bill James	Ofsted Inspector
Joyce Lydford	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Corr, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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