

Larkspur Community Primary School

Beacon Lough East, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 6SS

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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| 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 | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and other leaders, including governors, are highly ambitious and have a clear vision for the school. Their leadership has secured improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes since the previous inspection.
- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Teachers meet pupils' needs well by regularly checking their understanding and learning. Leaders have refined the assessment information available and teachers now use it effectively to plan appropriate learning activities.
- Some pupils are set challenging tasks that make them think hard and extend learning effectively. However, this is not consistently the case, especially for the most able pupils. As a result, some do not reach the higher standards they are capable of.
- Most pupils attend well but a small group of pupils are regularly absent.
- Leaders' effective monitoring of pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics ensures that pupils achieve well. Actions are taken quickly to support any pupils who fall behind. Monitoring is not as rigorous in other curriculum subjects.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are very committed to providing a high-quality learning resource for the local community.
- Thoughtful, high-quality care contributes much to the happy and harmonious school atmosphere. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure.
- As a result of good teaching and effective support, children in the early years make good progress. By the end of Reception, the large majority are ready for learning in Year 1.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults and have positive attitudes to learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching still further so that pupils reach the highest standards of which they are capable by:
 - ensuring that pupils are consistently set challenging tasks to extend their learning and progress, especially the most able pupils
 - developing the monitoring of pupils' outcomes in subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Improve attendance rates for the small group of pupils who do not attend regularly enough.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders provide strong strategic leadership. Working closely with the governing body, the areas identified in the previous inspection report have been swiftly addressed. They have worked successfully to eliminate underperformance, improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the pace of progress pupils make in their learning.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well as a result of ongoing, rigorous monitoring of the school's performance. They have identified areas that require further improvement, and are determined to ensure that continual improvement occurs.
- Middle leaders demonstrate effective management of their responsibilities. They clearly identify how actions for improvement have made an impact on teaching, which, in turn, is ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- The good communication that exists between all staff helps to maintain a positive culture of accountability and a willingness to develop professionally. Leaders monitor teachers' performance carefully. Teachers are set challenging targets linked to school improvement priorities and to improving aspects of their teaching where needed.
- Leaders base plans for further improvements on a clear view of what the school's strengths and weaknesses are and they detail these in the school development plan. Leaders monitor actions carefully so that they waste no time in further improving the school. Planned actions clearly align with the measurable rates of progress pupils make in their learning. They have, rightly, identified that the detailed and effective monitoring of pupils' progress in English and mathematics should now be embedded across all subjects.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as others in the school and are able to participate fully in all aspects of school life. In order to promote the progress of pupils supported by this additional funding, the school deploys skilled teaching assistants to help them keep up with other pupils in the school. Leaders and governors monitor effectively the impact that any additional provision has on the development and well-being of each individual child.
- Pupils with SEND receive appropriate support. Teachers identify their needs early and accurately track their progress, which is mainly good. Consequently, additional funding for pupils with SEND is used effectively.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used very well to increase staff expertise in the teaching of PE. Specialist coaches work alongside school staff, and the school has provided many additional opportunities for pupils to develop their sporting skills.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school. Parents appreciate that the school gives pupils an equal opportunity to succeed and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke to inspectors agreed that they would recommend the school to another parent and that their child was happy in school and felt safe.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Some new governors have been appointed, which has broadened and strengthened the skill set of the governing body. Governors are highly professional and clear about their roles. They are dedicated to school improvement. They now have a very clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, gained from detailed reports, attendance at meetings and their own first-hand experience in monitoring school performance alongside senior leaders.
- Governors provide both challenge and support to the school. They are rigorous in their examination of the school's performance data and regularly ask questions regarding the progress of different groups of pupils in different classes. Governors are adept at helping to set priorities for the school and hold senior leaders to account for the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors also monitor pupils' personal development and check that pupils are safe. They ensure that child protection and safeguarding are a high priority for staff, that procedures fully meet requirements and that they keep policies and practices up to date.
- The governing body ensures that additional funds are well spent. Governors are knowledgeable about the effect that additional funds have on pupils' progress, including funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A strong culture of safeguarding exists throughout the school. The governing body and staff take their responsibilities seriously and strong procedures are in place to ensure that staff effectively and urgently address any safeguarding concerns.
- Safeguarding training and records are up to date and are carefully managed.
- The long-established culture of keeping pupils safe remains very evident. Those with specific responsibilities for safeguarding ensure that they, and others, carry out their roles effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Observations of learning and scrutiny of pupils' work and assessments show that good, and sometimes highly effective, teaching is now established across most classes. This has led to standards of attainment rising in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who were previously underachieving are now catching up and differences in attainment are diminishing between different groups of pupils across classes.
- In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic in their learning and expectations for both achievement and behaviour are usually high. Teachers and support staff expect pupils to work hard. Workbooks show that pupils waste very little time. In lessons, pupils interact with other pupils to share ideas and improve their knowledge and skills.
- Guidance for learning is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to make it

clear to pupils exactly where they should focus their efforts in lessons. Pupils often receive clear criteria to help them assess their own work and to see how to improve it. This helps them make good progress in their learning.

- Reading skills are extended as pupils move through the school and teachers are now making sure that pupils have a good understanding of what they read. Pupils are encouraged to explore different texts that often link to the topic they are studying, and this helps to develop a love of reading.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are harmonious. The vast majority of pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy their learning. They often find lessons interesting and fun. However, the most able pupils do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable when work does not fully challenge and extend their thinking.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work closely together to ensure that timely additional support is provided for pupils. The quality of support is at its highest for those pupils involved in specific programmes to help them catch up, resulting in good academic progress, as well as strong social and emotional development.
- The teaching of pupils with SEND is good. There is strong support for pupils individually and their needs are well understood by both leaders and teachers. In class, they are able to join in the main class learning and, if necessary, they are given high-quality support by adults.
- The regular checks on pupils' understanding are also helping teachers to quickly identify misconceptions. This means that the issues are addressed quickly so that these misconceptions do not persist.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions and work happily and cooperatively together in lessons. They are proud of their school and show respect to their teachers and visiting adults.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and well looked after. They are confident that they would find someone in school to speak to if they had any worries or concerns. They know how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when online. They know that, should any minor instances of misbehaviour occur, staff will resolve them quickly and effectively.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare. They know the different forms it can take and to whom they should report any instances.
- Clear routines mean that pupils move between activities in class quickly and calmly. Pupils walk around school, to assemblies or to the dining hall calmly and purposefully. Pupils respond swiftly to teachers' instructions and expectations. This means that learning time is not wasted.
- Every parent spoken to by inspectors agreed that their child is happy and that children are kept safe in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and during the more unstructured times of the day.
- Pupils are attentive in lessons. They willingly answer questions and are keen to help and support one another. Pupils cooperate when working in groups and are mature enough to work independently and show initiative. Their good attitudes to learning are an important factor behind their improving rates of progress.
- A range of strategies have been introduced to improve attendance, including regular meetings with parents and a half-termly letter highlighting the attendance of their child. While this has improved attendance and reduced the number of pupils who are persistently absent, there is still work to be done to make it even better. A small group of pupils do not attend regularly enough.
- The school runs a busy breakfast club which encourages pupils to be punctual and to attend more regularly. This gives the pupils a chance to start their day in a calm and relaxed manner which ensures that they are ready to learn when they start the day's lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Improvements in teaching are leading to pupils making better progress throughout the school in a range of different subjects across the curriculum. This is confirmed by the good and rapid progress seen in pupils' books and observations of learning across the different year groups.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has been improving year on year and is now approaching the national average.
- Results in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 are also improving but have yet to reach the national average. This improvement is due to good-quality regular teaching of phonics in younger classes. Achievement has improved since the previous inspection and evidence gathered during the inspection shows that pupils currently in Year 1 are making good progress.
- The most recent national assessments results reflect significant improvements to pupils' attainment and progress compared with previous years. The national assessments also show that the progress made by all groups of pupils in relation to their starting points was significantly better than at any time over the last three years.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's accurate records show that current pupils are making good progress throughout the school and that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They have strong attitudes to learning and expectations of good achievement.
- Overall, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are making good progress. This is because additional government funding is used well to provide interventions that are tailored closely to pupils' individual needs.

- Although the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils make good progress in most classes, they are not sometimes fully challenged. This means that they do not consistently reach the higher standards they are capable of.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have established an exciting, stimulating, safe and language-rich learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. Adults work effectively as a team. All adults working in the early years are united in their aim of providing high-quality care and effective guidance for learning. They have ensured that the welfare requirements of the early years are met.
- In the early years, staff, children and parents enjoy highly positive relationships and effectively share information about what children can and cannot do. Through this, children quickly become confident learners with a positive attitude to school. For example, working in the sandpit, children took turns and discussed ways to find the buried dinosaurs.
- Most children join the early years with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their ages. They make good progress from their starting points but the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year, although improving, is below average.
- Teachers identify children's SEND accurately and at an early stage so that they receive the support they need to help them make good progress from their starting points.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is well spent and these children, including the most able disadvantaged children, make good progress.
- Adults know the children well. They make regular assessments and use these assessments to modify activities and their teaching to meet children's needs in both indoor and outdoor learning. Parents regard the early years highly and feel fully involved in their children's learning.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 108330 |
| Local authority | Gateshead |
| Inspection number | 10059039 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 120 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rose Envy |
| Headteacher | Margaret Liddle |
| Telephone number | 0191 487 5628 |
| Website | www.larkspurprimary.co.uk |
| Email address | larkspurcommunityprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 11–12 October 2016 |

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, shorter visits to classrooms were carried out to see particular aspects of the school's work, such as the teaching of reading or the provision of nurture guidance.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils, observed playtime and lunchtime and talked with pupils and staff around the school.
- Inspectors analysed documents, including the school's plans for improvement and reports showing the school's view of its own performance. The school's website was evaluated. Safeguarding documents and policies and records relating to pupils' personal development, behaviour, welfare, safety and attendance were inspected.
- Inspectors analysed information on the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally and the school's own record of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents spoken with in the playground at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Geoffrey Seagrove, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Dame Nicola Nelson | Ofsted Inspector |

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