

Lucas Vale Primary School

Thornville Street, London SE8 4QB

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Following the last inspection, past senior leaders and governors did not focus on ensuring that all pupils achieved well. Turbulence in staffing has had a negative impact on the quality of teaching over time.
- The early years provision requires improvement as the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time has been variable.
- Assessment information has not been used effectively to inform teaching. Consequently, activities do not consistently meet the needs of all pupils, including those in the early years. Some pupils lose interest in their work.
- Pupils have not benefited from an effective personal, social, health and economic education programme. A new personal, social, health and citizenship (PSHCE) education curriculum is in place but it is too early to gauge the impact of this new curriculum.
- Past governors have not held senior leaders to account as stringently as they should. As a result, there remains a legacy of weak academic achievement, as too many pupils have fallen behind in their learning. Pupils' attainment in some subjects and year groups is not keeping pace with national expectations.
- The monitoring of the priorities for school improvement by leaders, including governors, is not tightly focused. It does not provide clear information about whether the quality of teaching, and pupils' learning and outcomes, have improved.
- Money provided for the pupil premium is not well spent. As a result, some disadvantaged pupils are not supported well enough to make the good progress they are capable of.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed head of school has an accurate understanding about the priorities for improving the school. Swiftly, she and her leadership team have taken effective steps to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance, the curriculum offer, and teaching.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is now above the national average.
- The executive headteacher has set a clear vision for school improvement. She has brought in external expertise to support her in her development of leadership and governance.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through trips, visits and the broad curriculum on offer.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - teaching is consistently good or better across all year groups and in all subjects, including the early years
 - leaders' and governors' action planning and monitoring evaluate the impact their actions have on improving the quality of the teaching, learning and outcomes
 - tailored interventions result in good progress for all disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve teaching and learning across all key stages so that pupils achieve as well as they can by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information to address pupils' misconceptions swiftly in lessons
 - activities sufficiently challenge pupils and can be adapted to meet individual learning needs.
- Improve pupils' progress across reading, writing and mathematics so that they attain in line with, or above, other pupils nationally by the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years provision by ensuring that adults consistently use assessment information so that their interactions with children support them in exploring their ideas while practising their developing skills.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Following the last inspection, past senior leaders and governors did not focus on ensuring that all teaching enabled all pupils to achieve well. The consequences of this are still being felt, and there is not enough consistently good or better teaching across the school.
- After the dip in pupils' performance at key stage 2 in 2018, and weaker progress for pupils leaving the Year 6 classes since 2017, the executive headteacher stepped in to lead the school. She commissioned local authority support to audit the provision, working with leaders and governors to compile a thorough and accurate review.
- A new head of school was appointed by the federation, joining the school in January 2019. From November, she was released from her base school and worked with the executive headteacher, for two days a week. Since her arrival, she has worked effectively with the leaders across the federation and with staff.
- Strong leadership from the new head of school and her senior leaders is swiftly transforming the school. Consequently, staff at all levels are well supported and challenged, resulting in the rapid improvements seen. Improvements are particularly clear in the improved standards of writing and the better provision in place to support pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- However, the way senior leaders and governors monitor and evaluate priorities for school improvement is not yet tightly focused on how they will know whether the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and outcomes have improved.
- Leaders at all levels are not always clear enough about the impact they are having. They more readily discuss what they are doing, rather than how their actions and the initiatives introduced are developing teachers' professional expertise to improve the quality of the teaching further.
- The curriculum is well balanced and has been adjusted appropriately to include a wider range of learning experiences. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through trips, visits and the broad curriculum on offer. Artwork on display is of a particularly high standard and range, showing a clear progression of skills. Pupils benefit from a dedicated art room and specialist teaching in this area.
- Leaders have used the primary sports funding well to provide increased competitive sporting opportunities and promote healthy lifestyles. It has also been used to increase the confidence of primary school teachers to deliver core physical education through a coaching programme.
- The school is using its partnerships within the hard and soft federation well to provide support for middle leaders and opportunities for staff to check the accuracy of their assessments through joint moderation days. This is supporting subject leaders in their monitoring of provision in their areas of focus and staff in gaining a clearer overview of end-of-year expectations.
- Staff spoken to during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about the support offered by senior leaders and the many improvements that have taken place. The new

head of school is particularly popular with staff due to her tenacity, positivity and clear direction. Staff feel well consulted and value the head of school's teaching expertise and knowledge of what constitutes good-quality teaching. Consequently, staff are motivated and committed to improving the school.

Governance of the school

- Past governors did not hold senior leaders to account as stringently as they should. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment, in some subjects and year groups, have not kept pace with national averages.
- A highly experienced chair of governors, appointed in November 2018, and a skilled team of new governors have brought a fresh impetus to the governing body. The resulting team possesses a wide range of professional skills and benefits from the addition of a national leader of governance.
- Governors understand that attainment needs to rise swiftly and because of good support and training from the local authority, they are now much more confident to challenge senior leaders at all levels. Consequently, they are acutely aware that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively and it has had little impact on standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The recruitment checks on the suitability of staff and leaders to work with pupils are completed and recorded on the single central record.
- Staff, including new staff, receive up-to-date training on safeguarding issues and know how to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Staff vigilance and consistency in their expectations about behaviour and reporting any concerns contribute significantly to this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is variable. High staff turnover, at all levels of the organisation, has had an adverse impact on consistency.
- Some teachers' weak subject knowledge results in tasks set that do not build on pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills, or deepen their learning. Consequently, some pupils lose interest in their work and their learning slows. In these lessons, teachers do not always use assessment information effectively. Some teachers do not reshape tasks or adapt their explanations to help pupils' understanding or address misconceptions swiftly enough. This weakens pupils' progress; some activities are too hard for the less able or lack challenge for others.
- Pupils' books across a range of subjects show variability in the application of the school's recently introduced marking and feedback policy. In literacy and mathematics, better application of the policy is evident. However, this does not necessarily lead to

improvement in pupils' work. For example, in mathematics, teachers do not always follow up on pupils' understanding to plan activities that are adapted to sufficiently challenge and meet pupils' individual needs. On these occasions, teachers are over reliant on the delivery of the set mathematics programme and tasks.

- Recent initiatives to improve writing across the school are having a clear impact. Learning in pupils' 'my writing journey' folders demonstrates the stronger progress pupils are making in this area. Teachers are using their training to plan activities, trips and experiences which support pupils' writing well. Consequently, pupils across the school write with a clear awareness of audience and purpose. There are many good examples of pupils' writing across the curriculum.
- Teachers' planning ensures that pupils have good exposure to, and an understanding of, a wider range of writing genres within the topics studied. This is helping pupils to broaden their vocabulary and to edit and improve their writing. For example, pupils' breadth of learning about China or the rainforest is enabling them to make links with new and past learning, contributing to the stronger writing seen. Pupils in Year 2 spoke enthusiastically and with confidence about their learning on the rainforest, demonstrating a broad understanding of the geographical features of the seven continents.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. In the past, pupils have not benefited from an effective PSHCE programme. Pupils have an awareness of how to keep themselves safe, and what constitutes bullying. However, they do not have a good understanding of the different forms bullying may take. They have a basic awareness of e-safety.
- Leaders have implemented a new PSHCE programme to address pupils' limited understanding of bullying and to support further their developing self-confidence and self-awareness about how to be a successful learner. This has raised the profile of PSHCE across the school, but it is too early to see the impact of this on pupils' understanding.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of being active and the benefits of eating fresh fruit and vegetables and having a balanced diet of food. They enjoy the healthy lunches provided. After finishing their lunch, pupils take responsibility for carefully scraping their few leftovers from their trays into the waste trolley, making sure no food falls onto the floor.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While most pupils behave well, a small minority lose interest in their work and do not persevere with the task set or disengage. This is particularly the case when learning is not well matched to pupils' needs.
- Leaders are successfully ensuring that staff and pupils are made aware of the school's

expectations of behaviour. Pupils make a point of picking up pencils from the floor and packing away equipment at the end of lessons, demonstrating their pride in the school. The school site is well maintained, and graffiti- and litter-free.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above the national average. Successful strategies like weekly attendance awards, regular meetings with parents of children whose attendance is not good and the careful monitoring of attendance by the school's family liaison officer have led to a significant reduction in the persistent absence of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement. Pupils' progress across the curriculum varies due to variations in the quality of teaching. In some classes, staff mobility has contributed to pupils falling behind in the past and teaching over time has not been good enough to ensure that they catch up quickly in all areas.
- Scrutiny of current pupils' learning in books shows that although most pupils are making progress, variability in the quality of teaching between classes means not all pupils are making the consistently good or better progress required to catch up.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the most able and those who speak English as an additional language are making secure progress in line with their peers. Variability in progress is linked to the quality of teaching across the curriculum or classes.
- Leaders are aware that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the past, across year groups and subjects, have contributed to the low outcomes at the end of key stage 2 and that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics remains low in some parts of the school. However, where teaching is good, gaps are closing.
- At the end of key stage 2, in 2018, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below the national average. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard was below the national average in all areas. In 2018, prior attainment gaps narrowed between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was below the national average. At the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard was above that nationally for reading and writing and just below for mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement as the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time has been variable. This is consistent with senior leaders' own evaluation and confirmed by inspectors during joint learning walks and work scrutiny.
- Much time has been invested by the head of school and assistant headteacher in supporting staff in improving the learning environment and the moderation of assessment in the early years. Both senior leaders know what works well and what needs to be improved. Opportunities to moderate current children's assessments with

schools beyond the hard federation, and at local authority moderation meetings, are contributing to greater consistency and accuracy in adults' judgements.

- In addition, there have been improvements since the start of the academic year to the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Senior leaders have worked hard with teaching staff to ensure that classes are bright, well-resourced and set up to support learning. Where teaching is good, teachers plan and set up exciting activities and use questioning well to broaden children's vocabulary and understanding. However, some teachers and adults do not use assessment information effectively so that their interactions with children support them in exploring their ideas, while practising their developing skills.
- A system for tracking children's progress against all areas of the early years foundation stage is in place. Adults in the setting are capturing a range of evidence of children's learning in both the Reception and Nursery classes. The colourful learning journeys are providing a record of the journey of each child. However, there are no regular opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to their child's learning journey. Senior leaders are aware that opportunities for parents to share valuable information on what their children can do will contribute to giving the school a fuller picture of their children's development.
- Children enter the Reception classes with skills typically below their age and generally make good progress. In 2018, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was above the national average. Children leave the early years ready to start Year 1. However, at the time of the inspection, neither senior leaders nor the leader of the early years was able to provide a clear assessment of children's skills on entry to the Nursery.
- Strong partnerships with external services are ensuring that children with SEND are well supported and make good progress from their starting points. The provision of visual timetables and workstations with specialised resources is supporting those with more complex needs to learn well.
- Children's behaviour is good in the early years as they are encouraged to form secure relationships with each other and with the adults across the setting. Children are encouraged to share and take care of the resources on offer, carefully rehang items of clothing from the dressing-up area and eagerly tidying up before home time.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Senior leaders have ensured that the early years provision meets all the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage.

School details

Unique reference number	100695
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10058987

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	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Cunningham
Headteacher	Ruth De-Graft Gomado-Cobblah (head of school) Jeanette Brumby (executive headteacher)
Telephone number	02086 924 660
Website	www.lucasvale.lewisham.sch.uk
Email address	admin@lucasvale.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 July 2015

Information about this school

- Lucas Vale Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are three classes in Year 4 and two classes in all other year groups. The early years consists of two Reception classes and a full-time Nursery class which offers both part-time and full-time places.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the membership of the leadership team, governors and teachers. Following the retirement of her predecessor, the current executive headteacher took up her post in September 2016. She is a national leader of education. A new assistant headteacher, a special educational needs coordinator and a school business manager joined after to make up the leadership team, with the head of school.
- Following the departure of the previous head of school in July 2018, the executive

headteacher stepped in to lead the school. A new head of school was appointed in the autumn term and officially took up her post from January 2019. From November, she was released from her base school and worked with the executive headteacher, for two days a week.

- A new, experienced chair of governors, brokered by the local authority, was appointed in November 2018. Many new governors have joined the school since the departure of the previous headteacher. The school is in a hard federation with Grinling Gibbons Primary School and a soft partnership with Fairlawn and Haseltine primary schools. Grinling Gibbons and Lucas Vale have a joint governing body. A head of school is responsible for the day-to-day management and leadership of Lucas Vale. The executive headteacher works across all four schools.
- Most pupils are from Black African and Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school benefits from good support from Lewisham Learning, a schools-led partnership established by school leaders and the local authority which delivers school improvement to all Lewisham schools. Recently, senior leaders and new governors have received strong support from the director of Lewisham Learning, and a commissioned package of external consultant support brokered by the local authority. The school is also benefiting from the support provided by the other three schools within the hard and soft federation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to observe teaching and learning, and many visits were undertaken jointly with school leaders. Inspectors spent time with leaders looking through pupils' books and at the school's current assessment information, to consider how well pupils learn and achieve over time.
- Inspectors met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtimes and during the lunch break. They heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders to review the impact of their work, and leaders who are responsible for the leadership of English and mathematics, the early years, SEND and inclusion. Inspectors also met with two groups of staff from across the school, which included curriculum leaders and teaching, site and administrative staff.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including leaders' own evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Inspectors also considered a range of reports, policies and documents on the school's website.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school and assistant headteacher and a member of staff who oversees attendance.
- Inspectors met with two members of the safeguarding team to review the impact of their work on keeping pupils safe and the school business manager, who oversees the single central record of checks on staff.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents through informal discussions in the playground at the start of the day. Inspectors also considered the school's own recent parent and staff questionnaires. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to generate a report.

Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Bailey OBE	Ofsted Inspector
Rani Karim	Ofsted Inspector

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