

Larkrise Primary School

Dorset Avenue, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9UB

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils are well looked after and receive a good quality of education overall. The progress pupils make continues to improve and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- By the end of key stage 2, pupils attain well. In 2018, the proportion who met the national standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was in line with the national average.
- The school is well led and managed by a dedicated team of senior leaders and governors. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Since becoming an academy, the chief executive officer (CEO) and trustees have ensured that the school has improved. They are committed to providing good-quality education to pupils in the local community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. School leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain, and their focus on teaching values to pupils provides a moral framework that is shared by all.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs met well. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan learning that helps these pupils make good progress.
- There are positive school and home links, especially regarding reading. Parents and carers are fully involved in helping their children practise their reading skills at home. The teaching of reading is effective.
- Pupils develop their writing skills well. They have many opportunities to practise these skills in subjects such as history or science. Pupils' achievement in writing is strong.
- Adults' expectations of what children can achieve in Reception in reading, writing and number are not as high as they should be. More children have the capacity and capability to reach the required standard by the end of their first year and to be better prepared for Year 1.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. However, at times, particularly in key stage 1, pupils who take longer to grasp new mathematical concepts do not get enough practise to deepen their understanding.
- Not enough pupils who have the potential to be higher achievers work at a greater depth in key stage 1. This is mostly the case in mathematics.
- Leaders' plans to develop a strong and progressive curriculum are in the early stages. Ensuring that pupils develop an understanding of, and use, rich vocabulary in all curriculum subjects is still in its infancy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the early years provision by ensuring that children have more interesting and varied opportunities to develop their reading, writing and number skills, so that more reach or exceed the nationally required standard by the end of the Reception Year.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that more pupils consistently work at greater depth in key stage 1, especially in mathematics
 - providing pupils who take longer to grasp mathematical concepts, especially in key stage 1, with precise and well-considered teaching methods and resources, so that they can excel
 - ensuring that pupils understand and progressively use more complex vocabulary across all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by designing and effectively implementing a curriculum where there is clear progression across all curriculum subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school became a sponsored academy in September 2016. It is part of The Eveleigh LINK Academy Trust (TELAT), a multi-academy trust. Published information demonstrates that pupils' achievement continues to improve by the end of key stage 2. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1 and 2 is consistent over time. Leaders are ensuring that, overall, pupils receive a good quality of education.
- Larkrise Primary School has been on a journey of rapid improvement. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy and assistant headteachers, has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leaders have strong capacity to improve even further. They have started improving the quality of the early years provision and have firm plans in place to continue to develop this provision so that it is good.
- The CEO of the trust and board of trustees provide effective support and challenge. They have a very secure understanding of the many strengths and remaining weaknesses. They are dedicated to providing good-quality education to children in the local area.
- All schools in the trust meet regularly together to receive training and share best practice. Leaders and staff at Larkrise Primary have benefited from additional training to continue improving the quality of teaching. Equally, staff are provided with opportunities for leadership roles in different schools in the trust. Larkrise Primary School has a motivated and dedicated team of staff who are proud to work at the school.
- The leadership of pupils with SEND is a strength. The school has more pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) than found nationally. These pupils' needs are met increasingly precisely and well. This is because leaders ensure that staff are well trained and that these pupils receive equal access to the curriculum provided in class.
- The school uses additional funds, such as the pupil premium grant, to provide additional support staff in classes and to provide a family worker who supports parents. The impact of this funding ensures that disadvantaged pupils make similar and often better progress in their learning, especially in reading and writing.
- The leadership of literacy and mathematics is strong. These leaders have changed the way that reading and mathematics are taught across the school. Through incisive and accurate monitoring, these leaders continue to ensure that teaching is consistent and effective. Pupils are making good progress as a result.
- The view of parents is mixed. Many parents value the work of the school, especially regarding how happy their children are and the many activities that are provided. One parent's comments agreed with many others: 'Larkrise is a breath of fresh air. Staff are striving to be the best.'
- However, a small number of other parents consider that there is still much more work to do, especially about leaders listening to and acting on their concerns. Leaders have

already established a parent learning council to involve parents more in school life and to listen to ideas to improve. During the inspection, leaders held an additional parents' evening to show pupils' work. This event was well attended. Inspectors found that where there had been parental concerns in the past, the headteacher and the trust had taken issues seriously.

- Apart from English and mathematics, the leadership of other subjects across the curriculum is new. These leaders are enthusiastic and communicate a desire to improve the provision in their subject area. Nonetheless, there is not a sufficiently deliberate approach to developing pupils' progressive understanding and use of subject-specific vocabulary in subjects such as science and history.

Governance of the school

- The quality of governance is effective. The local governing body is well led by the chair of governors. There are clear roles and responsibilities for local governors.
- Governors ask relevant and effective questions in meetings to hold school leaders to account for the quality of education the school provides. Governors are dedicated to the work of the school.
- The multi-academy trust ensures that a trustee is part of the local governing body. Trustees are involved in setting and checking the strategic direction of the school. School improvement plans are sufficiently measurable and easily verifiable to enable checks on the progress made against the priorities.
- Governors regularly visit the school to check that pupils are kept safe and safeguarding processes are in place and effective. Minutes of governors' meetings demonstrate that the headteacher provides comprehensive information on this aspect of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders place a high priority on keeping pupils safe and well. All statutory safeguarding requirements are currently in place.
- Staff are well trained in identifying and reporting concerns. The designated staff for child protection ensure that appropriate and robust action is taken if required. They work with relevant external agencies and ensure that the welfare of pupils is the priority.
- Pupils are provided with suitable guidance from visiting speakers in assemblies, and in lessons, on keeping safe when using online technology. Those pupils spoken with were clear about what they would do to keep themselves safe when using social media. Pupils were confident that adults would take their concerns seriously.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and well cared for. Older pupils explained that adults listen and respond better now than in the past. They could identify a member of staff that they would speak with if they had a concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across key stages 1 and 2. Teachers in these key stages know pupils well and use the assessment information effectively to plan learning activities that help them make good progress over time.
- Adults have positive relationships with pupils. From the start of the school day, pupils willingly follow the clear and consistent expectations. Lessons flow easily, and time is used well. Pupils respond swiftly to teachers' directions; they participate well in lessons and present their work well.
- There is a clear and direct approach to the teaching of reading, which is proving effective. This year, teachers have ensured that class books are central to the school's curriculum. Pupils enjoy the chosen class texts. Pupils can locate information swiftly, explaining their answers well, using increasingly accurate vocabulary. Pupils read with fluency and accuracy, using appropriate expression.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop their writing skills, not only in English but across other subjects in the curriculum. They produce work that is well presented and written with increasing care.
- Teaching assistants are suitably deployed during lessons. They support individuals and groups well, using careful questions and other resources to help pupils access the learning. Pupils with SEND are very well provided for. These pupils make good progress.
- The many displays around the school celebrate the work and achievements of pupils. In history, some pupils proudly explained their history homework and how much they had learned from family members who remembered the times. They understood well the importance of first-hand accounts.
- Teachers use the school's chosen schemes of work consistently. Recently, the teaching of mathematics has changed. Pupils say that they enjoy the new approach and can easily explain what they have learned. However, those who are less confident with mathematics are not provided with enough opportunity to practise at their level before moving on. This is particularly the case in key stage 1.
- Some older pupils still have gaps in their learning from weaker teaching when they were younger. Staff in Years 5 and 6 are working effectively to ensure that pupils make better progress and achieve as well as they can. These older pupils are making good progress as a result to achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 6.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils take pride in the work they produce. They take care with presentation, and handwriting skills are often precise. They enjoy showing their work to visitors and parents. There are many displays that celebrate pupils' work. Younger pupils are very

confident when explaining the school's systems and how they learn in lessons. Pupils are very engaging learners, who show appreciation for their school.

- Each morning, pupils are provided with breakfast during registration. Those spoken with enjoyed this time and are appreciative of the choice of bagels and cereal they receive. Leaders say that they want every pupil to be ready for learning. The start of the school day is purposeful and calm.
- Pupils are courteous and respectful. They demonstrate the school values of ASPIRE very well. In assemblies, they sit quietly during the prayer times. They listen to each other and contribute their ideas during assembly with confidence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well provided for. Pupils experience a wide range of suitable visiting speakers in assemblies and additional trips and after-school clubs, to enhance their education. British values and the school's values are an established part of pupils' daily life.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and what it is not. Pupils can identify someone with whom they can talk if they are concerned. Parents have mixed views regarding bullying and how well it is dealt with. School records show that any issues are effectively addressed. Inspectors could not find further evidence to support the concerns of this minority of parents.
- Older pupils act as buddies for younger pupils. This system is appreciated by both. Younger children speak kindly about spending time with their buddy. They explain confidently about how well their buddy helps them around the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils respond well to the praise and rewards they receive. A reward point from their teacher or a word of praise is highly regarded. When adults direct pupils or ask them questions, pupils willingly and enthusiastically respond.
- Pupil conduct themselves appropriately during the school day. They move around the school safely and correctly. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are suitably energetic occasions that are well supervised. Pupils socialise and play well together.
- Records of behaviour incidents are well documented. Incidents of poor behaviour have decreased over time through effective management. Exclusions are rare.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Some pupils have exceptional attendance, and those with 100% are celebrated and rewarded. The school has measures in place for parents who do not ensure that their child attends well enough. Leaders have resorted to fixed-term penalties when there is no other supportive way to help improve a pupil's attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the previous two academic years, pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2 has risen. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was in line with that found nationally. The

proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard was above the national average. These pupils were well prepared for the next stage of their education.

- The progress pupils make in many other subjects continues to improve in key stage 2. This is because the quality and consistency of teaching these pupils receive are good. Published information demonstrates that pupils are making sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently on roll make strong progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and receive the same quality of education in class as all pupils. They also receive additional support when required. As a result, a very large proportion of disadvantaged pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Currently, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are achieving very well. Leaders have ensured that where there has been previous weaker teaching, these pupils receive well-chosen and precise additional support or lessons, so that any gaps in knowledge and understanding can be rectified. Pupils are making very good progress as a result.
- Pupils' achievement in key stage 1 is improving this year in mathematics. However, those pupils who find mathematical concepts more difficult to grasp are not always provided with different teaching approaches or enough resources to help them make better progress.
- The teaching of phonics is secure. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard by the end of Year 1 was around the national average in 2018. Currently, pupils have a good understanding of decoding words and phrases using their knowledge of sounds and do this well.
- In key stage 1, pupils who have the potential to work at greater depth are not provided with enough opportunity to do so. In the previous two years, the proportion of pupils who worked at the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics has been below that found nationally.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children are happy and well cared for in Reception. Over this year, there have been many positive changes to the environment and the overall quality of provision. However, not enough children are making good and better progress in reading, writing and mathematics to be well enough prepared for Year 1.
- Routines have not been as well established as they should. In this summer term, too much time is still spent on reminding children how to behave and what the expectations are. Consequently, not enough children are developing a positive approach to their learning.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. Firm plans are in place to improve the quality further. This year, enhanced support from the trust has been provided to revamp the outdoor area. Children enjoy the many opportunities they now have to learn and explore outside.
- School and home links are strong. Children's reading records demonstrate that many children are regularly listened to at both home and school. Children are proud of their achievements with their reading.

- From individual starting points, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2018 was below the national average. This is because not enough children reached the expected standard in writing and number. Currently, the provision in these subjects remains mixed, and assessment information is not being used as well as it should to help children make better progress. As a result, some children are not prepared for Year 1 as well as they should be.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed. Adults have positive relationships with children. Safeguarding and first-aid arrangements are in place and effective.

School details

Unique reference number	143124
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10088640

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sara Kightley
Headteacher	Lisa Battersby
Telephone number	01245471654
Website	www.larkrise.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@larkrise.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. It is one of five schools that are part of The Eveleigh LINK Academy Trust (TELAT). The school became a sponsored academy in September 2016.
- There is a local governing body that is responsible for overall management of the school. The trust provides strategic direction for the quality of education. The chair of trustees is a member of the local governing body. All trustees have active roles within schools that form part of the multi academy trust.
- The school has a much larger than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils. In 2018, the proportion was 49% and in the top 20% of all schools nationally.
- The school has a higher than average number of different ethnic groups. The largest ethnic group (80%) is White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have an EHCP and those who have been identified as requiring additional school support for SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors gathered a range of information to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included observing learning in all classes, some of which were jointly seen with the headteacher.
- The inspectors considered pupils' work in books, EHCPs and links to the school's assessment information to check the progress pupils make over time.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and middle leaders. A meeting was held with the CEO, the chair of governors and a representative of the local governing body. Inspectors also met with trustees of TELAT, including the chair of trustees. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including plans for future improvement and the school's evaluation of its own performance. Governors' minutes were reviewed.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils were examined, including the statutory information on the recruitment of staff.
- The inspectors spoke with parents and staff to gather their views. Parental views were analysed from 51 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and comments they made using the free-text service.
- Staff views were also analysed from 10 responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Copping

Ofsted Inspector

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