

Leverton Primary School

Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3BE

Inspection dates

4–5 June 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has raised expectations and initiated an ambitious programme of improvement, which is having a positive impact on all areas of the school.
- The new leadership team is successfully driving these improvements after a period of instability. As a result, current pupils are making good progress, behave well and are attending school regularly.
- Governors are knowledgeable about education and, along with leaders, are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. They support and challenge the headteacher effectively and make a valuable contribution to the ongoing development of the school.
- Most key stage 2 pupils are making much better progress than previously. Teachers make lessons interesting and help pupils to make connections across their learning. In some classes, writing is less successful as not all teachers help pupils to experiment with constructing sentences for greater effect.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. They make good progress and standards in reading have risen so that pupils now achieve as well as other pupils nationally. Writing and mathematics standards are rising but are not yet in line with national expectations.
- Provision to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language is effective. These pupils make good progress and are fully included in the school.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum so there are logical steps in the building of knowledge, skills and understanding over time. There are also regular challenging tasks and opportunities for reflection. This follows on from the good practice already present in key stage 1 and early years. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and for lower-ability pupils to apply their calculation skills to reasoning and problem-solving tasks.
- The early years provision is led well. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in a stimulating and nurturing environment. The proportion who achieve a good level of development continues to be above average.
- The school provides a safe, nurturing and aspirational environment that supports pupils very well. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of all that leaders and teachers do. As a result, pupils are given excellent support to be successful learners.
- Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. They are appreciative of all the efforts leaders and teachers make.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement further by making sure that:
 - pupils are taught how to vary sentences for greater effect in their writing
 - pupils have regular opportunities to write at length and, in doing so, improve their fluency and accuracy of writing
 - lower-ability pupils are moved on to the reasoning and problem-solving tasks so that they can apply their calculation skills in different scenarios.
- Ensure that standards in writing and mathematics continue to rise so that disadvantaged pupils achieve at least in line with national expectations for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- After a period of instability, including the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools and having no headteacher, the new headteacher and senior leadership team have brought about key changes that are now ensuring that pupils thrive under their care and attention. Staff morale is high and they appreciate the support and advice from senior leaders.
- The headteacher has created an ambitious ethos where all pupils can be the best they can be. Regular progress meetings, which cover how well pupils are achieving, guide actions for improvement. Effective use of pupils' assessment information ensures that pupils' gaps in learning and knowledge diminish.
- Staff are appreciative of the training they receive. Leaders believe in sharing good practice and visiting outstanding providers so that teachers can learn from the best in the profession. As a result, staff say they feel valued. They commented that the staff team from the two schools are now working as one team. Staff say they feel supported in their well-being so that they are free to teach effectively.
- The school provides pupils with a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. The new leadership team has focused successfully on improving provision in mathematics and English. The introduction of a curriculum that develops depth of understanding is ensuring that pupils are taught to master skills over time. Pupils study a wide range of topics in other subjects, for example from the study of Olympian gods to birds and their habitats. A wide range of trips and visitors who deliver workshops complement this. For example, most-able pupils undertake enrichment activities at Copped Hall. During the time of the inspection, Year 6 pupils were excited to be going on an outdoor education residential visit to Suffolk.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, the election of councillors for the school council follows Britain's democratic processes. Pupils undertake a range of philanthropic work, such as playing games with the residents of the local care home. Recently, they undertook a colour run to help raise money for St Clare's Hospice.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils. An extensive health and well-being programme, coupled with intensive academic support, ensures that pupils continue to grow in confidence and make good progress in their learning. Funding for pupils with SEND is also used well so that they make good progress. For example, there is a variety of programmes provided by external providers, such as speech and language therapists and play therapists.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used effectively to ensure that all benefit from participating in competitive sports. For example, pupils proudly told inspectors that all pupils get to compete in district sports competitions and events.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, and particularly appreciate the changes introduced by the new headteacher. Responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, one parent commented on how it now feels like 'one community', while another said that teachers deal quickly with any problems that arise.

- The local authority has provided excellent support during a turbulent time with leadership, for example ensuring that less-experienced middle leaders have access to high-quality training so that their monitoring and evaluation of provision are well informed. In addition, the link with schools from a multi-academy trust is enabling staff to moderate pupils' work and engage in additional staff training.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, governors have dealt with a number of important personnel matters, including the appointment of the current headteacher, in order to strengthen the leadership of the school. They share the passion and commitment of leaders in wanting the very best for Leverton Primary School. Consequently, they have sought good advice and undertaken appropriate training on a range of matters, including safeguarding.
- Governors challenge the headteacher and hold senior leaders to account, expecting a secure evidence base to support assertions about how well the school is doing. For example, they refined the reports from middle leaders to ensure that they clearly covered aspects to improve. Using the reports, they check leaders are addressing what they say they are through observing practice via regular school visits and discussions with staff and pupils.
- Governors oversee the finances of the school diligently. The pupil premium grant is spent wisely. They keep a close watch on whether pupils are receiving value for money. For example, they disbanded an extra class when the impact was not in step with other interventions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has created a safe culture to take care of its pupils. Leaders carry out robust checks to make sure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff understand their obligations for safeguarding and this is emphasised throughout the school's work, as well as in lessons.
- The school keeps accurate and up-to-date records of any safeguarding concerns. Effective relationships with external agencies and good ties with families ensure that early help is put in place when it is required.
- Less effective is the dissemination of key updates for staff. While staff could recall key aspects of important documentation, they commented that lengthy updates from senior leaders now and again were not as helpful as discussing key safeguarding aspects on a regular basis.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Senior leaders have focused on ensuring that teaching quality is consistent from year to year so that all pupils benefit from high-quality explanations, helpful feedback on how well they are doing and engaging activities. This is working. Pupils report that they

really enjoy their lessons and that there is minimal disruption to their learning. Standards are rising as a result.

- The teaching of reading, including phonics, has been a focus for staff training. Leaders have implemented a consistent and well-organised approach to the teaching of phonics in the Reception Year and key stage 1. Teaching builds securely and progressively on what pupils have already learned and pupils use their phonics knowledge well when they meet unfamiliar words. Pupils quickly develop confidence in reading.
- An overhaul of the class texts in key stage 2 and a revamped approach to guided work, where teachers show pupils how to probe the deeper meaning of texts, are leaving pupils inspired and challenged. Recommended reading lists and new book boxes are also helping pupils make informed choices for their independent reading. Several pupils commented to inspectors that they 'love reading'.
- The consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics is also paying dividends. Pupils understand what is meant by fluency, reasoning, problem-solving and mastery of mathematics. Having the language to describe how they are working helps them to realise whether they are working to their full potential. More often than not, they will spur themselves on to choose from the more demanding tasks from a menu of tasks given to them. However, lower-ability pupils tend to opt for the safe option, working on sums and calculations rather than applying their skills and knowledge to working out mathematical problems.
- The teaching of vocabulary and the mechanics of writing, such as spelling, punctuation and grammar, is evident in books and in classrooms. Classrooms have word walls with demanding vocabulary and, in some classes, word mats support the writing taking place. There is an onus upon pupils to correct their spelling errors. The high outcomes for the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test show pupils' good understanding of this component. However, pupils are not demonstrating such understanding in their lengthy writing.
- Most-able pupils are now regularly receiving extra tasks and different questions to tackle, which makes them think creatively and deeply. This is evident across the year groups and across the subjects. For example, in Year 1 mathematics, most-able pupils were given a picture to interpret, as well a task that required the pupils to identify patterns, hypothesise what occurred prior to the picture and predict what would happen next.
- Pupils with SEND learn well and show positive attitudes in lessons. Teachers regularly break large tasks down into smaller, manageable activities. Teaching assistants will support this process by pre-teaching material so that the pupil can experience success or teaching in tandem with the class teacher. Their work with pupils who start school speaking little or no English is also effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Parents are of the view that staff are very kind, caring and supportive. One commented that staff 'know my children inside out'. Inspectors agree. Each pupil is highly valued

by staff and this is replicated by the pupils, who look after each other. For example, the younger pupils know that they can approach any school councillor and they will play with them.

- Pupils are hungry to learn and want to do their best. Pupils asked senior leaders to have more homework in a variety of subjects and not just in English and mathematics. In lessons, pupils enjoy completing challenges and they are resilient when they do so. One pupil commented that when she gets it wrong she 'just tries again'.
- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school. They are proud to represent the school in sporting events and speak enthusiastically about the array of extra-curricular opportunities they are given. Year 6 pupils say that, although they are ready for secondary school, they will be sad to leave.
- Pupils identify when they need time for their well-being and emotional needs. For example, the sensory garden is a tranquil place where pupils can reflect and practise mindfulness when they are feeling upset or need time in a friendly safe space to cope with the demands of the day. Pupils talk about mental health with maturity and insight.
- 'It's OK to be unique here', one pupil said. Inspectors found this to be the case. Pupils appreciate diversity and have a well-developed understanding of how to support their peers who have particular social, emotional and physical needs.
- Pupils are well informed about the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Bullying is very rare and, when it does occur, it is dealt with well by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils and staff have enthusiastically received the new behaviour policy. Pupils are clear about the behaviour expected of them. As a result, pupils are hardworking and attentive in lessons.
- There is a calm and orderly atmosphere around the site. While the school is large, it does not feel so. Many pupils and parents commented on the 'family feel' and the kind behaviour pupils demonstrate to each other. Different year groups socialise well together at break and lunchtimes. The canteen is a hubbub of discussion and pupils chat happily in the queue while waiting to order their food.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They explain enthusiastically their learning and engage confidently in conversation with visitors. They are welcoming, courteous and well mannered, for example opening doors for you to pass through.
- The attendance of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is improving and is similar to all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is higher than average. A small group of pupils who have particularly poor attendance due to a number of issues, including illness, are affecting this overall figure. Leaders are working hard with parents to ensure that these pupils attend when they can.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have taken swift and decisive action to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching in reading and mathematics in key stage 2. Consequently, current pupils have made stronger progress than previous cohorts have. Pupils performed much better in the national tests in 2018 and more current pupils are now performing at expected or higher standards.
- The effective teaching of phonics means that most pupils meet the required standard by the end of Year 1. Pupils who did not achieve this standard by the end of Year 2 are now showing that, when they come across unfamiliar words, they can use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities now read effectively. They persevere when the text is challenging. Pupils read regularly at school and more pupils are reading every day at home.
- Teachers are consistently teaching mathematics in the same way. This ensures that pupils understand the mathematical skill taught before they move onto practising their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils' books show that teachers are providing more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems, and this is helping to raise standards in many classes. However, there is a tendency for the less able to remain practising their calculations rather than being pushed to try the harder reasoning and problem-solving tasks.
- Standards of pupils' writing vary. While there are plenty of writing opportunities across the curriculum to write in a range of writing forms, there is less opportunity for pupils to write regularly at length. This means that when they do so, they tend to lose coherence and make more errors with spelling, punctuation and grammar. Not all teachers help pupils to experiment with writing sentences for effect.
- The books of the most able pupils show that more are reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2. This is due to a regular diet of challenging tasks. In addition, more pupils are attaining greater depth in mathematics in key stage 1 so that this is now in line with that seen in schools nationally.
- Effective use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils enables them to make good progress across their subjects. However, like their peers, standards in writing are not as strong as those attained in reading. While disadvantaged pupils are showing improvements in their mathematical skills, more pupils need to reach national expectations by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good gains in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Equally, pupils with SEND are supported well and make good progress from their starting points. This is because they enjoy their lessons, are supported well and receive carefully targeted intervention.
- Pupils make good progress in a range of other subjects, including art, geography and history. This is because teachers give pupils many opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that interest and enthuse them.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception because provision is led well and the curriculum is managed effectively. Many children achieve a good level of development, with some exceeding this measure. Consequently, children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Children typically choose from a range of activities that develop their learning in the context of their curriculum theme. Adults lead activities well, questioning and challenging children to practise and extend important skills.
- Staff are adept at steering children to lead play and discovery. For example, while role-playing at a baker's, Nursery children adapted their plasticine cakes according to their choices, with one child enthusing over their worm cake! The learning assistant cleverly steered the conversation to measuring the lengths of the worms, helping to reinforce earlier learning on measurement. There was much delight and giggling when she then mimicked trying to eat the worm cake.
- Warm relationships characterise the early years classes. Children play happily together and develop their social skills quickly, for example making sure that they take turns when playing with items. They are also vocal about fair play. Reception children told off the leader of an assembly where the teacher would not take turns playing the game Connect 4. They felt confident to do so in front of older peers from other years.
- The systematic teaching of phonics is well embedded into the routine of the Nursery and Reception classes. Children are well supported to learn new sounds and have regular opportunities to consolidate their existing skills.
- Children learn from an early age to make marks and to write. Staff are specific about how children should hold pens and pencils to write and draw with control. Nursery children are encouraged to write words and phrases. At the time of the inspection, Nursery children were writing name cards for their superhero potatoes. For a few children, such formal learning was too difficult.
- The most able Reception children are achieving well. For example, they are able to write for a sustained length of time, with the correct spacing and in accurate sentences.
- The close monitoring of children and regular assessments help teachers to intervene early where learning issues arise. For example, pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported through speech and language therapy programmes.
- Staff keep children safe and care for them well in the early years. All of the statutory welfare requirements are met and the school's safeguarding practices and procedures are strictly followed.

School details

Unique reference number	115282
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10088653

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

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	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Tredgett
Headteacher	Lisa Gibbs
Telephone number	01992 715 885
Website	www.leverton.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@leverton.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November–1 December 2016

Information about this school

- Leverton Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. In September 2016, the infant school joined the junior school to form one school. It has a Nursery for three-year-olds that runs a session in the morning and in the afternoon. Almost all the children enter the school when they get to Reception age.
- There have been changes to the leadership team, including a new headteacher, since the last inspection.
- The school is an associate member of Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust.
- The school has an ethnically diverse population. An increasing proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEND support or who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector discussed the school’s effectiveness with a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were also held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the business manager, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years foundation stage leader, staff with responsibility for safeguarding and pupil premium coordination, and teachers who are in their first three years of teaching.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. This included policies, leaders’ evaluation of the school’s effectiveness, the school’s improvement plans, safeguarding records and information about pupils’ behaviour, attendance, attainment and progress.
- Inspectors considered the 38 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.
- Inspectors considered 60 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents when they dropped their children off at school at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Nutman	Ofsted Inspector
Rachael Judd	Ofsted Inspector

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