

Langdon Primary School

East Langdon, Dover, Kent CT15 5JQ

Inspection dates	6–7 July 2016
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

- Pupils achieve well. Children make a good start in the early years, and year on year their achievements are rising. Across the school, there is an improving trend in reading, mathematics and writing since the previous inspection so that now pupils in all parts of the school achieve at least as well as pupils elsewhere.
- This is because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good. Where there has been weaker teaching in the past, leaders have made sure that the pupils receive high-quality teaching to enable them to make rapid progress and catch up quickly.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well both personally and academically. The school provides a safe haven for pupils with social and emotional needs. Strong bonds are forged across age groups which benefit all pupils.
- Relationships are warm and underpinned by strong values of care and kindness. As a result, pupils behave well and are kept safe. There is a strong focus on ensuring that every pupil is recognised and respected as an individual.
- The school is well led and managed. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate. The headteacher and staff work well as a team to ensure that improvements are school wide.
- Governors know the school well and balance support with challenge very effectively. They maintain an incisive focus on making sure that the actions taken result in improvements for the pupils.
- Parents, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. Pupils and staff are proud to be a part of this small school which, in the words of the local authority adviser, 'has come to life' since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Improvements have been relatively recent and need to be embedded and sustained.
- Teaching and learning are not consistently good across all subjects.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning further and embed improvements by:
 - quickly moving pupils on to more challenging activities when they are finding the work easy
 - making sure that pupils have the opportunity to achieve well in all subjects including geography, design technology and a foreign language
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their initiative and make decisions about their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The vast majority of parents, pupils and staff who responded to the surveys are very positive and many parents are fulsome in their praise for the school as a whole and the headteacher in particular.
- The headteacher and governors have taken effective and decisive action to improve the quality of teaching. For example, when it became necessary to make changes earlier this year, the decision was taken for the inclusion teacher and the headteacher to share the teaching in one class. The decision is vindicated in the dramatic improvements seen in the pupils' books. Nonetheless, the quality of teaching is still rather vulnerable due to recruitment difficulties, and the current teaching commitments of the headteacher have restricted the time she is able to commit to leadership and management.
- All of the staff feel well supported. They share the ambition of leaders and believe that the school is both calm and aspirational. This positive ethos is underpinned by strong values, most notably, care and respect for each individual and a celebration of differences. The staff all believe that their performance as teachers has improved. Their confidence in themselves and expectations for the pupils have risen since the previous inspection.
- There is a strong team approach to leadership. As a result, staff feel very involved in bringing about change, making a positive difference and taking responsibility for the quality of education provided. Teachers collaborate to make changes in teaching and the curriculum and to check that the quality of pupils' work is improving in all classes. The headteacher leads by example and visits all classes regularly to check on and to support teaching and learning.
- School self-evaluation is very detailed, evaluative and accurate. It is supported by the involvement of staff and governors so that everyone is clear about the strengths, weaknesses and next steps for school improvement. The areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection have been tackled thoroughly. Now, without taking their eye off key priorities such as continuing to improve and maintain the improving trend in reading, writing and mathematics, it is time to turn the focus to other areas of the curriculum that have not moved on as effectively. The school's improvement plan is practical as well as ambitious. However, it is rather repetitive and could be sharper.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised. Interventions are tailored to meet individual needs and carefully evaluated to make sure that they are making enough difference. There is good liaison with external agencies to address more complex learning and well-being needs.
- Funding is tight and the leaders make every effort to make best use of additional funding such as the pupil and sports premiums. They commissioned an external review of the pupil premium spending to make sure that they were making the most efficient and effective use of it. They check carefully on a child-by-child basis to make sure that any additional support really is making a positive difference.
- The curriculum has been revised appropriately in line with the latest requirements. Coverage is broad and balanced and teachers try to build on the interests of the pupils. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the residential visits which pupils in key stages 1 and 2 enjoyed enormously this year. Pupils also enjoy a range of clubs, including those for sporting and artistic activities. The gardening club is to be congratulated for providing such a lovely, flowery entrance to the school.
- The transition arrangements which support pupils moving into and out of school are effective. As a result, pupils move confidently into school, from class to class and onwards to secondary school. The strong focus on building confidence, tolerance and respect also prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- School leaders and staff are outward looking. They seek out, and act on, advice from the local authority, a local leader of education and colleagues from other schools in the collaboration. The joint working with these three other schools gives staff the opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other. There are also opportunities for all pupils to take part in various sporting activities along with the pupils from the other more culturally diverse schools. As well as making good use of the sports premium and increasing their participation in different sports, these activities also widen their knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The headteacher says that the governors, 'keep her on her toes' and that is because they are well trained, well informed and balance support and challenge very effectively. They know the school well and make a strong contribution to the ethos, goals and direction.

- The roles and responsibilities of different governors are clearly defined so that each governor knows what they need to focus on. They visit the school regularly to keep a close eye on whether the actions in the improvement plan are happening, and they carefully evaluate the impact of any actions.
- They ask thought-provoking questions and require the headteacher to provide them with useful and informative reports on all aspects of school life.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Parents are confident that their children are safe in school. Several commented on the high quality of communication and how well the staff know every pupil and their families. Systems for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers are rigorous. Staff training is up to date and staff are alert for any signs causing concern and act quickly to support any pupils who may be encountering personal difficulties. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Improvements in the quality of teaching and assessment are resulting in significant improvements in pupils' reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills. Staff have used the changes in the national curriculum and assessment requirements to develop a deeper understanding of teaching and learning. Their expectations about what pupils can achieve are rising.
- There are positive relationships throughout the school and a sense that adults and pupils enjoy spending time learning together. The classrooms are well organised and have useful materials on display such as the 'talk for writing' plans and key vocabulary.
- Teachers and teaching assistants plan together so that there is a shared understanding about the learning. Lessons build on what pupils know, can do and need to do next. A good example of this was a music lesson during the inspection when the teacher and assistant built on the instrumental skills of each pupil so that everyone extended their skills and contributed harmoniously to the whole piece.
- Across the school, there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. This means that pupils are developing good early reading and writing skills. Careful planning and sharply focused teaching mean that specific higher level reading skills such as inference are also being taught well.
- Adults give useful feedback during lessons to move the learning on and clear up any misunderstandings. Pupils also improve their work as a result of helpful written feedback. Occasionally, teachers do not react quickly enough to move pupils on when pupils find the learning easy. Sometimes, the activities are a little limited and pupils all do the same thing with little scope for them to use their initiative or try something a bit different. More typically, teachers ensure that the needs of individuals are met and everyone is quick to celebrate the achievements of all pupils.
- The whole school has adopted a coherent approach to the teaching of writing. Staff and pupils are enthusiastic about this approach. Both can see the benefits in enriching vocabulary and helping pupils to recognise and use varied techniques in writing. For example, older pupils recognised how an author built tension and suspense. As a result, the quality of pupils' writing is improving rapidly.
- The teaching of mathematics has been thoroughly overhauled since the last inspection with a greater emphasis on problem solving and reasoning. Mathematics is also included in other subjects when possible. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 examined the properties of different types of pyramids as part of their history topic on Egypt. Older pupils interpreted graphs of recent crime statistics in Kent as part of a longitudinal study of crime and punishment.
- Teachers try to make sure that activities are engaging and build on pupils' interests. They provide good opportunities for enquiry, investigation and explanation in subjects such as history and science. The teaching of music and physical education is also strong. Almost all parents say that the varied homework activities are valuable. The quality of teaching in some subjects such as geography, design technology and foreign languages is less effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Parents and pupils are very positive about the school's caring, community feel. Pupils are safe, happy, and well looked after in school. The results of pupil, parent and staff surveys confirm this, as do the pupils in person.
- Personal development has improved over the past two years because as well as being happy in school, pupils now make better academic progress. They are confident to speak up and make a contribution to discussions. However, sometimes they are rather dependant on reassurance and confirmation from adults before moving on and trying something a bit harder or different, and there is potential for them to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- There is a positive approach to behaviour management and strong support for pupils' individual needs. When necessary, the headteacher and staff make sure that pupils benefit from access to counselling, individual support and specialist external expertise.
- Attendance is at least as good as the national average, and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has risen sharply so that it is now much higher than that of the other pupils and well above the national average.
- The arrangements to support transition are effective so that pupils are well prepared to move between classes and on to the next stage of education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They behave well in lessons and are typically engaged and focused and pay attention. Playtimes and lunchtimes are thoroughly enjoyable. Pupils across the age groups get on well together and the cross-age cooperation and harmony are notable features of the school.
- No off-task or inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection either in lessons, in the dinner hall or outside and pupils say that most people behave well all of the time. They say that there is very little bullying and pupils are confident that if anything untoward does happen that the adults deal with it very well. As a result, exclusions are exceptionally rare and there has been none this year.
- Pupils show kindness, care and respect for others and they are keen to take on responsibilities such as being a sports leader. They understand and can discuss values such as democracy, and recently held their own European Union referendum.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- There has been a rising trend of improvement in pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills and knowledge across all age groups and this trend has continued during the current year. Rising achievement across the school is most notable in Years 2 and 6 with almost all of these pupils achieving the expected level for their ages and over 40% achieving greater depth in learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Reception children have also achieved well this year and the upward trend is evident in Year 1 as a rising proportion of these pupils have reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check.
- Current data in school is showing improvements in every age group and from pupils' differing starting points. Where weaknesses have existed, the gaps are closing. Pupils' books show good progress over this year, and although spelling is still fragile for some pupils, the improvements are evident, as is the quality of presentation.
- Improvements are very noticeable in the books of pupils in Years 3 and 4, which show that their progress has accelerated dramatically since January. This has made up some lost ground caused by less effective teaching in the past.
- Pupils' writing books show the positive impact of the school-wide approach to the teaching of writing. Pupils are transferring the strategies learned into their writing across different subjects. Pupils read confidently and act out stories and texts with expression and fluency as part of the reading and writing strategies.
- All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, also achieve well as a result of closely tailored support which meets their specific needs. Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their classmates. There are few gaps and those that remain tend to be caused by the complex needs of a very small number of pupils.
- Pupils are confident to discuss and explain their reasoning in mathematics. The books show that they are covering a lot of ground and regularly extend their learning by taking on additional challenges. For some pupils, particularly the most able, there is scope for even more challenge, to be moved on more quickly, to have more choice and to take more responsibility for their learning.

- Pupils achieve well in other subjects such as music and physical education. However, the higher expectations and improving quality in English and mathematics are not replicated across the whole of the curriculum, particularly in some subjects such as geography and design technology.

Early years provision

is good

- The youngest children are confident, articulate and able to say what they enjoy learning. Their achievement has risen since the previous inspection so that a higher proportion than average leaves the early years with skills and knowledge which are typical for their age group. This proportion has risen again this year to include almost all of the children.
- The early years is fully incorporated into whole-school leadership and management. There are good routines so that children feel safe and confident. Relationships are warm and behaviour is good. The children benefit from having lots of contact with older pupils. They quickly make friends across the school and learn what it means to be a pupil in Langdon School.
- Parents are happy with the information they receive, their involvement, the quality of communication, care and the accessibility of staff. One parent wrote that their child runs into school every day and several commented that their children had enjoyed a really good first year in school.
- The staff carefully check on the children's abilities and adapt their planning to address any weaknesses. For example, the school identified that some children arrive with weaknesses in their understanding of mathematics. The action taken to address this has been successful.
- There are good examples of real-life learning. For example, some children made their own passports with the teacher's passport as a guide. Children were heard to shout excitedly, 'There's a square!' as they searched the school building and grounds for differently shaped objects. There was some very determined whisking and mixing and lots of discussion going on in the mud kitchen.
- Nonetheless, although planning is careful, there is scope to include some more challenging and interesting activities, particularly when the children are making their own choices. Both the inside and outside areas would benefit from more tempting prompts to spark interest across different areas of learning. Once the children get the go-ahead to get started with the different activities, they settle quickly and concentrate well. However, there are times when the pace of the discussion and thinking time on the carpet is a bit laboured and slows them down.
- Reception children are fully included in school life. The more consistent and successful approaches to the teaching of phonics and writing apply to them too. They enjoy the writing strategies and some opt to continue with writing when they have a choice of different activities.
- Reception children often work alongside the key stage 1 class. They fit in well and are ready for the next step in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	118398
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10009192

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Hilson
Headteacher	Lynn Paylor Sutton
Telephone number	01304 852600
Website	www.langdonprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	lpalorsutton@langdon.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools. It is situated in the countryside just outside Dover in Kent.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and therefore additional government funding through the pupil premium is below average.
- The great majority of pupils are White British, with English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- A higher than average number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than at the beginning of the Reception Year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector and headteacher jointly observed teaching and learning and visited all classes at least twice. During these visits, they looked at the work in pupils' books. The inspector carried out a further scrutiny of pupils' books from each age group.
- The inspector toured the school with two pupils, had lunch with pupils on both days and listened to some pupils while they were reading.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of information provided by the school, including information on assessment, monitoring and performance management, safeguarding records, self-evaluation and improvement planning documents, and records of governors' activities.
- She met with the headteacher, five governors, all of the teaching staff, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 10 responses to the online staff survey, 32 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online parent survey) and 54 responses from pupils to the online pupil survey. She also met with parents at the school gate at the start of day one, received a record of a telephone call from one parent to the Ofsted inspection office and had telephone discussions with two further parents.

Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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