

# Luton Infant and Nursery School

Alexandra Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 5AP

**Inspection dates** 27–28 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement is not good enough in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1.
- A lower-than-average proportion of pupils achieve the higher National Curriculum levels.
- Not enough progress has been made in meeting the recommendations from the last inspection.
- Middle leaders do not have the opportunity to check on the progress of different groups of pupils.
- In some lessons, the rate of learning is not quick enough, and pupils are not actively involved in their learning.
- Some teaching assistants are new and not yet fully trained to carry out their roles.
- Not all lessons provide enough opportunity for pupils to apply phonics (knowledge of letters and sounds) well enough to develop their reading and writing.
- Too many pupils do not attend regularly or get to school on time.
- Pupils' overly boisterous behaviour in the playground is not always managed well and movement around the school is not as good as it could be.
- The governing body has not challenged the school enough because it has not been provided with enough information on pupils' progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have identified the right actions to bring about improvement.
- Children in Reception settle quickly into school and learn well.
- Pupils supported by additional funding do well. The gap between their attainment and that of their classmates is closing rapidly.
- Leaders and managers have created a positive and safe environment for pupils to learn and develop.
- There are examples of good and outstanding teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons or part lessons, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school’s work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor displays. Inspectors attended one assembly and visited the school’s breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with various members of staff and representatives from the governing body and the local authority. The inspectors spoke to pupils and looked at behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspectors also looked at documentation about pupils’ progress, teaching and planning. The school’s safeguarding policies, procedures and practice were scrutinised, together with records of attendance and pupils’ behaviour.
- Six parents and carers completed the online survey Parent View. This was not sufficient to see the results of the survey on the website. Therefore inspectors took account of the school’s most recent parent survey and one letter from a parent. They spoke to several parents and carers when they brought their children to school. They took account of 23 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Helena Evans, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Michael Jude

Additional inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional inspector

## Full report

- This is a much larger-than-average infant school, and the roll is rising.
- The Nursery classes admit children in the term following their third birthday.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, with a rapidly growing population from Eastern European backgrounds who often speak very little or no English when they arrive.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the average.
- A growing proportion of pupils join the school later than the normal points of entry.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority) is double that found in most schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above that usually found.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club.
- The deputy headteacher has been on maternity leave since the autumn term 2013.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations by:
  - ensuring teaching assistants are fully trained
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds
  - making sure the rate of learning is more rapid, especially for the most able pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that methods for checking on and evaluating pupils' progress are firmly in place
  - using this information to determine clear and relevant objectives in order to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, speed up progress, and improve the behaviour of pupils as they move around the school and at playtime
  - building leadership capacity at all levels by enabling middle leaders to have access to the school's tracking information so they can use this to hold teachers to account for how well pupils in their class are doing
  - providing governors with timely information based on accurate self-evaluation so that they can offer increased levels of challenge.
- Increase the rate of attendance and punctuality by working closely with parents, carers and other agencies to reduce the number of pupils taking frequent days off, and ensure that pupils arrive in school before the school starts.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are significantly below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication and language skills and in their social development. The small number of children who attend Nursery make good progress, but because of their significantly low starting points they enter Reception with very low levels of learning and development.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly develop the confidence and independence to learn for themselves. However, attainment at the end of Reception varies. A large number of pupils join throughout the year with skill levels that are very low or with little English spoken language. Although they make progress, they are not fully prepared for Year 1. Those who start in September make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. They have good social skills and a positive attitude to learning.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 the standards achieved by pupils are significantly below those of all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. There has been improvement over the last three years but the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 has not been quick enough. It is likely that the school will not meet expected levels of attainment again in 2014. Fewer more-able pupils achieve the higher Level 3 in writing and reading when compared to their peers nationally. A significant proportion of more-able children do not achieve Level 3 in mathematics.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils who reached expected standards in the Year 1 phonics (linking letters to sounds) check was below average. Pupils with limited vocabulary or those at an early stage of learning English make slower progress because they do not have enough practice in using words in familiar contexts through speaking activities and in their writing. However, recent improved teaching has led to better progress in reading.
- Overall, more pupils achieve Level 2 in mathematics than in reading and writing, but the gap is narrowing. Children of all abilities are beginning to make gains in mathematics because they are now taught well and have plenty of opportunities to use practical equipment to solve a range of problems.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is checked and regularly reviewed. Carefully planned support, which closely matches individual pupils' needs, makes sure that these pupils make progress that is similar and often better than other pupils'.
- Pupil premium funds are used well to ensure that the achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority matches that of other pupils. This is because of the quality of the extra help provided for them, such as learning in smaller groups. This is an improvement on 2013, when these pupils were one term behind their classmates in reading, and half a term behind them in writing. Typically their attainment in mathematics has been stronger. The school's data indicate that they will achieve standards that are better than those of their peers in all subjects in 2014.
- Pupils who start school with very little English are well supported to ensure that their English language skills improve. Those who join make good gains, but their attainment is one and a half terms behind that of their peers in mathematics, and two terms behind in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as pupils' learning has not been good enough. Nearly all the teaching seen during the inspection was of at least good quality, with some that was outstanding. Better teaching since the last inspection has led to an overall improvement in attainment, but this has been too slow to accelerate pupils' progress.
- In some classes teachers do not always adapt lessons so that slower learners get extra help and more able pupils can move on quickly. This slows the pupils' progress.
- Progress slows when pupils do not have enough opportunity to deepen their understanding of new or unfamiliar words. For example, in one Reception class, pupils sharing a book did not

know what the word 'sip' meant. This part of the lesson was not planned well enough to reshape the learning at this point.

- In some classes, pupils' learning is not sufficiently quick because some teaching assistants are relatively new and not yet trained to be fully effective in supporting pupils with specific needs. More experienced teaching assistants secure good progress because they model the use of language well and develop pupils' thinking via skilful questioning.
- Children who attend Nursery and those in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a positive start as a result of the caring environment and good teaching. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of the children and plan an interesting range of activities which meet their different learning needs very well.
- Teachers relate very well to pupils and have high expectations of their work and behaviour. The majority of lessons proceed at a good pace because the activities engage pupils and maintain their interest. Technology is used very effectively to support learning.
- Work is marked frequently and accurately. Teachers give pupils good advice in lessons about the ways they can improve their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Systems for entering the school in the morning and expectations for pupils moving around the school are not high enough. This results in them being overly noisy and fussy.
- Routines for the dining hall are not well managed. Too many children enter the building, and this results in them waiting for too long at the serving hatch. Sitting in cramped conditions does not contribute positively to their well-being or develop their social skills sufficiently well.
- In the playground, pupils play and get on well together. However, adults do not provide them with enough activities to occupy them, equipment is limited and too much boisterous behaviour goes unchecked. Findings in the inspection confirmed that a number of parents and pupils are concerned about this. The school has identified this as an area to address and plans are in place to make the necessary improvements.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and behaviour in classrooms is good. Adults provide clear guidelines on what is expected regarding their behaviour and this leads to a calm classroom where pupils' learning is not disrupted.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and they say they feel very safe in school. They know about the different kinds of bullying.
- The school has recently appointed a home-school worker and she is developing systems to check on and follow up absences. Although improving, attendance is still below average.
- The vast majority of parents say that the school keeps their children safe.
- The breakfast club offers pupils a range of enjoyable and purposeful activities. It provides a healthy and positive start to the school day for those who attend.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching has not been effective enough to ensure that pupils reach expected levels of attainment.
- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has established a range of strategies to enable the school to improve. However, the pace of improvement has been too slow. The absence of the highly effective deputy headteacher on maternity leave has not been well managed, leaving a gap in the leadership team and reducing the capacity for the school to improve at the rapid pace required.
- Leaders and managers have identified the right priorities to take the school forward. However, the school improvement plan is not sufficient to provide clear direction because there are no measurable targets for improvements. Methods for checking on pupil progress, the quality of teaching, attendance and behaviour are not robust. As a result, the school has an inaccurate view of how well it is doing.

- The school has recently introduced a new system for tracking pupil progress. Middle leaders do not have access to this information and so do not have an accurate view of whether pupils are doing well enough in their subject, and are not able to focus their actions appropriately.
- The management of teachers' performance is effective, and a contributing factor towards the good and outstanding teaching in the school. There is a clear link between teachers' performance and their salary progression. The headteacher has tackled any underperformance swiftly.
- The curriculum provides an appropriate range and balance of subjects and topics. The focus given to developing pupils' early reading, literacy and numeracy means that basic skills are developing well. Pupils enjoy the additional enrichment opportunities such as clubs and educational visits.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Particular strengths are the development of social skills and high levels of trust and care that exist between the pupils and their teachers.
- The primary school sport funding is used appropriately by seeking the expertise of specialist coaches drawn from the local sports partnership. This has been used to increase the pupils' sporting opportunities and to train the staff in sporting activities. This is helping to promote pupils' appreciation of developing healthy lifestyles and contributes to their well-being.
- The welfare of each individual pupil is at the heart of the school's work. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination effectively.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet requirements.
- The school has benefitted from recent support provided by the local authority. However, it has not been held to account sufficiently well since the last inspection to ensure that the recommendations from the last inspection were met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body is fully supportive of the school and is determined to secure its improvement. However, governors do not have a clear overview of pupils' attainment and progress and therefore only have a partial understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is because they have not ensured that other leaders have paid sufficient attention to making accurate evaluations of the school's work. Monitoring visits are not always focused on the correct priorities. Governors are aware that most of the teaching in the school is good, and that it is improving. They hold discussions about the performance of teachers and ensure that any salary increases are linked to pupils' progress. Governors take advantage of training to help them fulfil their roles. They manage the school's finances well, including the deployment of pupil funding for pupils looked after the local authority and those eligible for free school meals and sports funding. The governing body is thorough in ensuring that its statutory duties are met, particularly with regard to the safeguarding of children.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118319
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	441034

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	297
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Beverley Garratt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Lythgoe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 843019
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