

Little Reddings Primary School

Harcourt Road, Bushey, WD23 3PR

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Early years provision | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that teaching is consistently good enough for all pupils to make rapid progress.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar are not taught well in all year groups. This means pupils do not apply these skills accurately in their writing.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they are learning or the steps they need to take to be successful.
- Approaches used by teachers, including in the early years, do not always offer sufficient challenge to the most able, or engage boys sufficiently in their learning.
- Teachers' assessments are not checked rigorously to ensure that they are accurate.
- Pupils do not always respond to teachers' comments in marking to improve their work.
- Expectations of what the children can achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not high enough.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Lapses in behaviour in lessons by a small number of pupils are not always dealt with in line with agreed policies.
- Leaders and managers responsible for subjects are new to their roles. They do not yet contribute fully to the school's actions needed to raise achievement.
- Communication with parents is not always effective.
- Governors do not gather their own evidence to provide independent challenge to school leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher gives clear direction to the work of the school. Together with the senior leadership team, she is having a positive impact on teaching and standards.
- The pupils benefit greatly in spiritual, moral and social development from the highly inclusive nature of the school. They also benefit from good involvement in the local community and activities within the academy trust.
- The actions of leaders have increased pupils' attendance significantly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- The pupils enjoy being at school and say they feel safe. This is because the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents agree.
- The school cares for pupils well. Arrangements to help children settle in the Nursery and Reception classes ensure they feel comfortable quickly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors, a representative of the local authority and the academy trust.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils reading and spoke with pupils about behaviour and the safety arrangements at the school.
- The views of 74 parents and carers were analysed through the Parent View website. In addition, inspectors spoke with some parents when they brought their children to school.
- The views expressed by the 19 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Melanie Callaghan

Additional Inspector

Matthew Rayner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Little Reddings Primary School converted to an academy on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of Bushey St. James Trust with the neighbouring secondary school, Bushey Meads School.
- There have been a large number of staff changes since the school became an academy, including the appointment of a new headteacher in April 2014.
- Just over half of the pupils are White British. Other pupils in the school are from 14 different ethnicities; the largest groups are of Indian, Pakistani or African heritage. This is above average.
- One pupil in three speaks English as an additional language. This is above the national average.
- One pupil in five is disabled or has special educational needs. This is above average.
- One pupil in four is supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. This is above the national average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two full time Reception classes and a Nursery Class with morning and afternoon sessions.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the early years, so that it is typically good by ensuring that:
 - pupils are clear what they are learning
 - behaviour in classrooms is managed in line with agreed school policies
 - work is pitched at the right level and provides a high level of challenge so that all pupils, particularly the most-able pupils and boys, are engaged in their work and make rapid progress.
- Raise standards in writing, ensuring that the progress made by pupils is equally rapid in all classes, by:
 - ensuring that pupils maintain high standards of presentation as a matter of course
 - ensuring that spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught well in all year groups
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length, especially the most-able pupils
 - encouraging pupils to write independently in different subjects
 - ensuring that pupils act on their teachers' written guidance to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - embedding the existing systems to monitor teaching and achievement
 - ensuring that the role of subject and other leaders is fully developed so that they can check standards in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that teachers' assessments are accurate
 - developing the governing body's monitoring to ensure that school leaders are challenged and held to account for their work
 - developing effective communication with all parents.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and governors have not ensured that all teaching has been good over time. Despite recent improvement there remains some inconsistency across classes and year groups in the progress pupils are making, particularly in writing.
- Staff with subject and year group responsibilities are new to their roles. They have yet to contribute effectively to the school's actions to speed up pupils' progress across the school.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher, since her appointment, has ensured that the school site is safe for pupils, the Nursery provision has improved, attendance has increased and expectations of teaching and pupils' achievements have been raised. The decisions to employ sports coaches and to develop the Children's University have greatly increased pupils' opportunities to take part in extended learning activities.
- All staff who responded to the staff questionnaire praised the impact of the headteacher and commented on their involvement in school developments. As a result, staff morale is high with all staff actively supporting the headteacher's drive for improvements.
- The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. The accurate self-evaluation informs a development plan which includes all the right priorities for the school. In a short time, the headteacher and senior leaders have shown that they have the capacity to improve the school further.
- Procedures to manage staff performance have strengthened this year. Leaders identify and tackle underperformance. Staff targets are now linked more closely to the standards expected of teachers. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving teaching.
- Subjects and topics covered by the school are broad and balanced. The school's curriculum is enriched through the use of the school's local area, many visits and effective use of new technologies. It is having a positive impact on preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures and they respect others whose background or religion is different from theirs. This is further enhanced when pupils take home the school mascot 'Arthur' to take part in home celebrations, pictures of which are displayed around the school.
- The new curriculum and assessment arrangements are at an early stage of development.
- The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. Information from in-school assessments is used to identify pupils who are not making the progress they should and to provide additional support. Additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils in one-to-one and group activities. This has resulted in pupils attaining a higher level than similar pupils nationally.
- The school successfully uses the primary sports funding and has improved provision for physical education. Teachers and specialist coaches combine to run additional activities at lunchtimes and after school. Participation by pupils is high and the various activities are having a positive impact on behaviour and enjoyment of school.
- Most parents who spoke to inspectors and who completed the online survey Parent View have confidence in the school. Inspectors agree with the small minority of parents who felt that communication has not been effective in explaining the changes at the school or keeping them informed about their children's progress.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority adviser knows the strengths and weaknesses at the school. Together with the academy trust, she is now providing support and advice although it is too early to see the long-term impact of this

work. New systems are being implemented by the trust to ensure that performance management of teachers and managers' accountability is robust and clear.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is supportive and takes great interest in the activities of the school. Since the formation of the academy trust there have been many changes of governors. Those new to their roles are increasingly involved in the life of the school. They visit school special events and have good links with the local community.
- Although governors are regularly informed about pupils' progress and teachers' work from the headteacher, they do not challenge robustly. They do not have sufficiently rigorous systems in place to check the accuracy of the comments and of the impact on pupils supported by the pupil premium. This limits their ability to hold school leaders to account. They know about the school's strengths and weaknesses but do not monitor school developments thoroughly, including the impact of primary sports funding.
- Governors are aware of the school's arrangements for staff pay and progression, including that of the headteacher, but do not yet use this information to ensure that movement up pay scales is closely linked with improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties. They ensure that safeguarding including recruitment of new staff in the school meets requirements and that the school's financial arrangements are secure.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A few pupils are not always as focused and quiet as they need to be in class to help them make the best possible progress. A small number of pupils occasionally become boisterous in their learning which can cause minor irritation for other pupils. This is not always dealt with swiftly by teachers. The school's new behaviour policy is not implemented consistently by all staff.
- Most parents and staff have no significant concerns about pupils' behaviour, although some say it could be better than it is. The great majority of pupils respond well to the school's high expectations and the new behaviour policy. Pupils are polite and show good manners to adults and to one another.
- Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school and talk about their memorable learning experiences in the last year. These include the opportunities for whole school activities, for example: writing to their heroes, increased activities with the Children's University and the ever-increasing provision of after-school clubs.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities. Roles such as playground ambassadors, school councillors and monitors, as well as interaction with older pupils from Bushey Meads School, have a good effect on their personal development. During the inspection school council members led an effective anti-bullying assembly for Key Stage 1 pupils.
- Pupils take pride in their school, and have helped contribute to the many colourful displays seen everywhere in their school. However, their pride in the school does not always feed through into their own work, where presentation varies widely.
- Attendance has steadily risen over the year and is similar to the national average. The school has robust procedures to deal with excessive absenteeism and the small number of pupils who arrive late for school. There have been no exclusions of pupils since the school became an academy.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club get a good, healthy and sociable start to the day. The breakfast club has helped to improve the attendance and punctuality of some pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their children are kept safe. Inspectors agree with their views.

- A small minority of parents expressed concerns about bullying. However, inspectors found no evidence during the inspection or in school records to support this view, and pupils say they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. Older pupils know how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Pupils are confident that any problem will be resolved quickly. They know that name-calling and inappropriate language are not allowed. This contributes to the school's calm environment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because pupils' progress over time, particularly in writing, has not been consistently good. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are not taught consistently well across the school.
- Occasionally, in a few classes, the most-able pupils do not make enough progress as the work set is too easy and does not motivate them. This is because teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils of all abilities know what to do to be successful in their learning. This slows their progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and provide detailed advice on the next steps pupils need to take to improve their work, as well as praising what they have done well. However, pupils do not routinely respond to this advice. Homework is not consistently used to challenge and engage pupils further in their learning.
- Where learning is best, teachers ask probing questions to make pupils think carefully. This helps pupils to learn well because they are able to share and develop their ideas. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils enjoyed discussing their challenges with each other. They were eager to answer questions and contribute to their learning and this supported their good progress.
- Following a period of change, staffing is becoming more stable and expertise is growing. The rapid action taken by the headteacher in addressing underperformance and providing training and support is resulting in improved teaching and, consequently, better learning by pupils.
- The high priority given to the teaching of how letters link with sounds (phonics) ensures that pupils read well throughout the school. Younger pupils demonstrate that they can read with good understanding while older pupils read with confidence and enthusiasm. The older pupils have a love of books and can talk confidently about the authors whose books they enjoy reading.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well by teaching assistants in small groups outside the classroom and make good progress in their language acquisition. They are also supported by adults and pupils from Bushey Meads School who have the same home language. In class, however, they do not always receive enough support to make the same good progress they make in their small group work.
- Pupils needing extra help, such as disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged, are given well-targeted support by teaching assistants outside the classroom. They make good progress in these sessions.
- Reading is taught effectively and the school ensures that pupils access a good range of high-quality books and resources. Work in pupils' writing books shows that grammar is not always being taught effectively. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length and apply the skills in the topics they study. Although progress in mathematics is improving, pupils are not always challenged to achieve highly enough or given sufficient opportunities to apply skills to practical problem-solving tasks.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because not all pupils make good progress year-on-year in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress has been hampered by frequent changes of staff, weaker teaching and some disruptive behaviour.
- In national tests in 2014, Year 6 pupils' attainment improved in reading, but was not as good in mathematics and writing as in the previous year. Accelerated progress in Year 6 enabled pupils to reach average levels, which made up for their slower progress earlier. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics remains average this year.
- In the Year 6 national tests in 2014, some of the most-able pupils did not reach the higher levels of which they were capable, particularly in writing.
- Pupils in the early years and Year 1 acquire good skills in phonics. This helps them to make good progress in reading, but they do not apply these skills well in their writing. Older pupils without this knowledge find it hard to spell accurately or read unfamiliar words. In 2014, pupils' standards in the national phonics screening check were above the national average.
- Observations of pupils at work, their work in books and school data indicate that pupils from the wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including those who are at an early stage of learning English, make similar progress to their classmates.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills and experience typical for their age. Although most children reach a good level of development by the time they leave Reception, their achievement requires improvement because too few boys make good progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 did not do as well as other pupils at the school in 2014, although the gap narrowed. Data show that they were two terms behind their classmates in mathematics and one term behind in reading and writing. They were one and a half terms behind other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils throughout the school are making faster progress than their classmates so gaps in their attainment are narrowing.
- While the school fosters good relations amongst all groups of pupils and makes sure there is no discrimination, there remain some inequalities in opportunities for learning. For example, the support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in lessons is not yet consistent enough across years and subjects to ensure that these pupils always make good progress. Consequently their progress requires improvement. However, they do make good progress in the high-quality individual and group support sessions outside the classroom.
- Most pupils talk with great enthusiasm about the books they have read. Guided reading groups focus on stretching pupils' ability to understand text through teachers' challenging questions.
- Pupils are making good progress in a number of other subjects, including information and communication technology. Older pupils were able to have in-depth conversations with inspectors about computer coding and the wide range of opportunities they have to use new technologies.
- Pupils' skills in physical education are also improving quickly because school sports funding is used to provide more effective teaching of physical skills and healthy lifestyles.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because not all children, particularly boys, make good progress. There are variations in the quality of the provision between the Reception and Nursery classes, both indoors and outdoors, which limits children's

opportunities and progress. The recent improvements in the Nursery class are resulting in these children now making better progress than those in Reception. This is because adults quickly and successfully interact with children to enable them to learn well.

- Leaders do not analyse assessment information in sufficient detail to understand the strengths and areas for development of the classes or specific year groups. Assessments are not checked to ensure that they are accurate.
- Although children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in some areas of learning, especially in reading and social and physical development, their progress is much more variable in the key areas of writing and number work. Consequently, some children are not fully prepared for Year 1.
- Children settle quickly into the routines of daily education in the Nursery and Reception classes because all staff are welcoming and give good levels of care and attention to each and every child. Parents commented on how quickly the children had settled this term due to helpful, well-managed integration into the school when children start Nursery.
- Children behave well. A good ratio of adults to children means that there are plenty of staff around to show children how to improve their skills. Children's independence skills are not promoted equally well in all classes. Planning of adult-led activities, including the teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics), is not always based on what the children can already do because assessments are not systematic or regular enough. Staff set up a wide range of interesting activities to develop skills in all areas of learning, although the Reception outside area is not as enticing as the classrooms.
- Although leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are at an early stage of development all welfare and safeguarding requirements are met.

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

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| Unique reference number | 137861 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 448627 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 442 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Simon Kinna |
| Headteacher | Carly Simmonds |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
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