

Forest Lodge Primary School

Charnor Road, Leicester, LE3 6LH

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Under the dynamic leadership of the headteacher, the school has improved rapidly since the previous inspection and is now good.
- From their different starting points, pupils of different abilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The pace of learning is good and pupils are eager to succeed. They receive good guidance through the marking of their work in English and mathematics.
- Provision for children in the early years is effective. They make good progress because teaching is good, particularly in Nursery.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their general behaviour in classrooms and around the school is exemplary. Pupils feel very safe in school.
- The culture of tolerance, respect and calmness which pervades the school leads to outstanding elements in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The senior leadership team makes rigorous checks on the effectiveness of the school's performance and quality of teaching.
- The governing body is very well guided and led by the Chair. Governors are ambitious to improve the school further.
- Pupils benefit from participation in a wide range of sporting activities and very effective classroom-based learning that promote their physical well-being and their enjoyment of school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Despite the school's relentless efforts, attendance remains below average.
- Occasionally, tasks set by teachers do not extend or challenge pupils, especially the most able, sufficiently.
- The presentation of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics sometimes lacks care and is untidy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 35 lessons, six of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 reading.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in many books of pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Inspectors conducted formal and informal meetings with pupils, teachers, parents, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 50 responses to the staff questionnaire. Parent View was not available to inspectors, because too few parents had responded online. Inspectors thus took account of 126 recently completed paper-based versions of the same questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at various school documents. These included: the school’s self-evaluation form; the school development plan; records relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning; the school’s information on pupils’ past and current performance; records of meetings of the governing body; records and documents relating to the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Terry McDermott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Hooper	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Forest Lodge is much larger than the average-sized primary school, and is increasing in size. A new school building, to enable the school to accommodate three classes per year group, is being constructed adjacent to the present building.
- The school operates morning and afternoon Nursery classes. All year groups from full-time Reception to Year 5 have two classes. Year 6 has three classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, just over half of the school population, is much higher than the national average.
- About a third of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. This is broadly similar to the national average. About a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language. Although this is much higher than most schools, few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, about a fifth, is broadly average.
- The school has a close association with two other local schools, with whom ideas are shared, and learning initiatives planned and carried out.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attendance.
- Improve the consistency with which teachers:
 - ensure that tasks are always set which challenge all pupils, but particularly those who are the most able
 - insist that work is always completed carefully whatever the subject.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The energetic and very effective headteacher and the calmly capable deputy headteacher provide strong and improving leadership for the school. They check closely on the quality of learning taking place in lessons, and provide teachers with clear guidance on how to accelerate this. This has led to marked improvements in achievement and, therefore, overall effectiveness since the last inspection. They are successfully building the leadership capacity of the school in preparation for its forthcoming expansion.
- They have created a culture within the school where everyone strives hard to do their very best for the benefit of the children. Staff morale is high, as is shown in their very positive response to the staff questionnaire. The school knows where it wants to go and how to get there. It is on an upward trajectory and well placed to improve further.
- Leaders, working in tandem with governors, check closely on the learning and progress of all pupils. The school's detailed and accurate tracking system ensures that any pupil who may be falling behind is quickly helped to catch up. As a result, no group falls behind, and all make good progress. This reflects well on the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all of its pupils.
- Although some are new to the role middle leaders are effectively assuring the quality of pupils' learning in those areas for which these leaders have responsibility.
- The school's effective curriculum has a very strong focus on helping pupils to improve their basic skills. This has resulted, at the end of Key Stage 2, in a four-year trend of rising standards in reading and writing, and a four-year trend in rising standards overall. The school gives pupils many opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills, to experience different cultures and ideas, and to participate widely in sport, art and music.
- There is a strong focus in religious education, circle time and assemblies on considering and appreciating the efforts and achievements of others, of sticking to agreed rules, and helping those who are less fortunate. This underpins the school's excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, and also that there is no discrimination of any sort.
- The additional funding for primary physical education is used most effectively to train staff and encourage healthy lifestyles for pupils. The school employs specialist coaches from a nearby Premier League football club to provide motivation and improve the skills of pupils. A specialist teacher of physical education works with class teachers to enhance their teaching skills, and directly with pupils in the classroom to build their understanding of the effects of a good diet and active exercise on their bodies.
- Pupil premium funds are used well. In addition to providing extra resources, such as books and electronic equipment, subsidies for trips and music or sport tuition, funding is used to provide individual and small-group support where the need is greatest. Over time, gaps in attainment and achievement are closing.
- The school takes all aspects of safety and safeguarding very seriously. It meets all the current safeguarding requirements easily, and is very effective in keeping pupils safe. Pupils and parents confirm this.
- The school is acutely aware that, despite all its best efforts, some traditional and some very creatively modern, being relentlessly applied, the attendance of pupils remains stubbornly below average.
- Links with other schools give adults the opportunity to share good practice and widen their horizons. This is ensuring that they come to appreciate the quality of their own work in helping pupils to learn more rapidly.
- The local authority has provided good support and guidance for the school in recent times, acting as a

sounding board and checking that actions were having the desired effect.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body, though small, is knowledgeable, well led, and provides both constructive challenge and positive support and encouragement. Governors know how well the school is performing because they know how to cross-reference information from a range of sources. They check how the pupil premium funding is being spent, and the impact it is having on narrowing the gap in achievement for disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that the school meets the requirements for safeguarding pupils' well-being. They have a good oversight of the quality of teaching throughout the school, and ensure that good teaching is rewarded and underperformance tackled. Despite these strengths, the governing body is very dependent upon the expertise and personal commitment of the experienced and able Chair.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good as are their attitudes to learning. When challenged hard to work things out for themselves, they respond with enthusiasm, perseverance and impressive concentration. When teaching is occasionally less interesting, they can become quietly disengaged after completing their work.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is of a consistently high standard. Their social development is excellent. They are well mannered, polite and helpful to each other and to visitors. They play well together during playtimes without any silliness because they understand the reasons why boundaries are set.
- There have been no exclusions since the last inspection, because pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The behaviour records maintained meticulously by the school show that incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. Pupils say that bullying almost never occurs, though they do know exactly what to do if they should come across it.
- Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities they have to contribute to the life of the school. They value serving on the school council, actively fundraising for charity, or acting as mediators. Older pupils support younger ones by acting as reading partners.
- The good take-up of before-school and after-school clubs is enabling pupils to extend their time for academic and social learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school's leaders maintain robust systems to ensure this remains so. All staff have undertaken relevant training. The school maintains effective checks on the suitability of persons who work in the school, or their associates.
- The school works hard and effectively to keep pupils safe beyond the school gates. For example, pupils are very knowledgeable about road safety, and they know about the dangers presented by internet usage.
- Parents, staff and the pupils themselves are unanimous in the view that children are very safe in school.
- Attendance remains consistently below average despite the tenacious efforts made by the school. However, the school has been very successful in reducing lateness by almost 90% in the course of one school year.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and learning. It is readily apparent from looking in pupils' books that teachers normally set different work for different abilities within their classes, so that most pupils are working at the right level to challenge and stretch them.
- Very good relationships between adults and pupils provide solid foundations for good learning throughout

the school. Pupils and adults treat each other with respect, whether asking for explanations or giving reasons for a particular line of thought. Teachers encourage pupils to think things through for themselves, and often use other pupils to modify or correct misunderstandings or misconceptions. This ensures that learning remains focused. This process begins in the early years, is consolidated in Key Stage 1, and extended in Key Stage 2.

- The pace of learning is good. Pupils are eager to succeed, and engage in their work readily. They listen carefully to the guidance of adults, and with serious consideration to views of their peers. An excellent example of this was seen in a religious education lesson in Year 3, when pupils worked independently in small groups to come to a preferred view for a world-wide 'celebration day'. By then sharing their views with the whole class, and voting democratically, they came to an agreed focus on how to move forward. This process, in a short space of time, truly encapsulated 'British Values' of tolerance, respect for the views of others, respect for the rules of a discussion, and inclusivity. Learning about things other than reading, writing and mathematics was outstanding.
- Older pupils, in particular, say that they are usually challenged and encouraged to improve or accelerate their learning in a range of subjects. They appreciate that the targets they are set and the checklists ('steps for success') they are given are there to clarify and support their learning.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of individual or small groups of pupils. They reinforce topics which pupils have found difficult, and supervise pupils practising different challenges. This level of focus ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported so that they can make as good a rate of progress as almost all other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Books are marked regularly and usually indicate what pupils have to do next to get better. Inspectors saw many examples of pupils responding to marking comments. Comments in English books are very crisp in their guidance, and this explains why an average, and increasing, proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Occasionally, because they have been presented with tasks which are mundane and do not extend their thinking, some of the most able pupils in a class finish work quickly. This is not always spotted promptly enough by teachers, and causes these pupils' learning to slow down. This is why a below-average proportion of pupils reach the higher grades in reading and mathematics.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, the presentation of pupils' work can sometimes be untidy, showing both inconsistency of expectation by teachers and a subsequent lack of care by the pupils.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Evidence in pupils' books, and a review of individual pupils' progress using the school's accurate and reliable tracking system, shows that achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. In some instances, particularly around pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, progress is outstanding.
- Throughout the school, all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those from a minority ethnic background, and those whose first language is not English, make consistently good progress over time. Attainment in Year 6 is already close to the levels reached in 2014, which was broadly average overall. However, the proportions reaching higher levels in reading and mathematics were below average.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics, reading and writing in Key Stage 2 has been better than the national average for the last two years. In 2014 and in 2013, the school was placed in the top fifth nationally for progress made in all subjects in Key Stage 2. Assessments suggest that this rate of progress is at least being maintained in the current school year.
- Pupils' progress in English is good. Younger pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, of different abilities, say they love

to read, or show great pride when they sound letters accurately and then blend them together into a word. Older pupils use a good vocabulary when writing in different genres using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to produce extended independent writing.

- In 2014, the small number of most able pupils in the group makes meaningful evaluation of their achievement difficult. The school's internal records track the progress of many different groups of pupils accurately and meticulously. These records convincingly suggest that the proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 predicted to reach Level 5 and Level 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is on track to be much higher than the school has ever reached previously. The proportions of pupils currently in Year 6 already at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics are already similar to those attained at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- Disadvantaged pupils now make similar progress to other pupils in the school. Last year, disadvantaged pupils were about two terms behind other pupils in the school and all pupils nationally in mathematics and reading and by about one term in writing. Current pupils' work shows that the gaps in school are narrowing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. They make similar rates of progress to most other pupils in the school.
- Pupils from a minority ethnic background make similar progress to all other pupils in the school. No minority ethnic group of pupils underachieves.

The early years provision

is good

- Children achieve well in the early years. They enter Nursery with skills and knowledge which are underdeveloped for their age. In particular, many pupils have limited language and communication skills.
- Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich range of worthwhile opportunities to foster development of children's basic skills and personal attributes. Teaching is consistently good, with all adults making good use of the school's resources and facilities. As a result, children make consistently good progress, and are well prepared to start Year 1 when they complete Reception Year.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception classes improved notably in 2014, and was not significantly below the national average. However, children's writing skills were a weaker element.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are good, and benefit from the influence of the thoughtful and perceptive assistant headteacher. Staff plan learning activities effectively. This ensures that they give ample opportunities for children to develop independence, as well as their basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Staff have developed good relationships with parents, both through pre-school home visits and regular day-to-day communication. This ensures that their children's entry into Nursery takes place smoothly and calmly, and that they settle into new routines easily.
- Relationships between children and staff are excellent. The children learn very quickly to trust the adults who take good care of them. As a result, the children rapidly gain confidence to work and play together in harmony. They take on board the respectful and caring behaviours being modelled by the adults. This lays very strong foundations for the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of later years in school. It is not surprising that that pupils enjoy school in the early years, or that smiles and laughter are commonplace.

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

Unique reference number	120090
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	453616

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	475
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Hibbert
Headteacher	Claire Caldwell
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2013
Telephone number	0116 2871220
Fax number	0116 2874590
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