

Lent Rise Combined School

Coulson Way, Burnham, Slough, SL1 7NP

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2015

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | 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.

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. High-quality early years provision makes sure that they are ready for more formal learning by the time they move to Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and reading during their time at Lent Rise because teaching is consistently good.
- Senior leaders have taken effective action to improve the teaching of writing this year. Pupils' writing skills are developing well.
- Standards are high by the time pupils leave at age 11. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils enjoy school. They have positive attitudes to learning and behave well around school and in the playground.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted very effectively. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents and carers are right to be confident that their children are safe and happy at school. Pupils' safety and well-being are given high priority. Systems to refer any concerns about pupils are robust. Work to improve attendance has been successful.
- Senior leaders accurately identify what the school does well and what needs to improve. Governors and staff at all levels are clear what the school's priorities are.
- New middle leaders are already providing effective support for their teams to improve teaching and learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not consistently of the high standard required for all pupils to make excellent progress over time.
- New leaders lack experience of using data to monitor pupils' performance.
- Governors do not always ask searching enough questions about achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including information on pupils’ progress and the use of additional funding, records of the monitoring of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors visited 19 lessons, including two that were jointly observed with senior leaders. They looked at pupils’ work in their books, attended an assembly and heard pupils read.
- Members of the two school councils and pupils with other responsibilities met with inspectors to talk about their work and the school. Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and around school and observed break times and the start of the school day.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. They talked with staff and took account of 28 responses to Ofsted’s questionnaire for staff.
- The team took account of 96 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter from a parent or carer. They also spoke briefly with a small number of parents and carers as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Alison Bradley, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Anna Boshier

Additional Inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lent Rise is a larger-than-average size primary school.
- Children join the Reception class in September. They all attend full time.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Most speak English as their first language. Very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is just above average.
- Few pupils are disadvantaged (those eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- All but two of the teaching staff and half the teaching assistants are new to the school since the last inspection. All of the senior leaders have been appointed to their current roles since the school was last inspected. Most middle and subject leaders have taken up their posts in the last year.
- Lent Rise trains new teachers as part of the Nottingham University school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further by ensuring that all teachers consistently:
 - check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching accordingly to maintain a brisk pace and appropriate level of challenge for all pupils in all lessons
 - give pupils time to respond to feedback so as to learn how to improve their work.
- Enhance leadership and management by making sure that all leaders, including governors, know how to use performance data effectively to monitor pupils' learning over time and hold staff to account.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. Senior leaders are accurate in their identification of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have taken effective steps to review and improve the teaching of writing this school year.
- Senior leaders are committed to nurturing current staff and teachers of the future so that pupils get the best teaching possible. Teachers relish opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and rise to the challenge, looking for ways to improve the quality of education further.
- Systems for monitoring teaching and learning are well established. Teachers' pay is linked to the achievement of pupils in their class. The senior team regularly observe lessons and look at pupils' progress over time to check that all pupils are doing as well as they should be. Senior leaders rightly decided, given significant staff changes and with a quarter of teachers at an early stage of their career, that a different approach was needed this school year. New middle leaders have been appointed and have taken on their roles with enthusiasm. They are providing effective support for their teams to improve teaching and increasingly using data about pupils' progress to monitor learning.
- Teachers meet formally with leaders to review how well pupils in their class are doing on a termly basis. These meetings identify which pupils are, or are at risk of, falling behind and need extra support. Occasionally, however, the data are not a true reflection of pupils' skills as more weight is given to test results than to teachers' assessments of what pupils can do on a day-to-day basis.
- Pupils clearly enjoy school and appreciate how important learning is. Well-planned topics ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills in a range of subjects are developed over time. Pupils are encouraged to debate and discuss matters and to be confident users of modern technology. Themed weeks, such as the business enterprise activities inspectors saw, bring learning to life. Parent packs are detailed and informative, explaining how parents and carers can support their child's learning at home and help to improve writing.
- The school is successful in its wider aims. It develops confident pupils who 'are able to make a significant contribution to a constantly changing society' and prepares them for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about 'individual and collective responsibility towards the school and wider community' by taking on roles such as recycling monitors or play leaders. The work of the two school councils gives pupils a voice in the running of the school and introduces them to elections and representation. The Year 5 politics and democracy day examines how British government works. Pupils develop a mature 'respect for religious and moral values and tolerance of other races and ways of life' through learning about other faiths and e-twinning with countries around the world.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Additional support ensures the youngest pupils develop the early reading and writing skills they need in their early years at the school. Carefully targeted extra help for individual pupils or groups is having a positive impact on achievement as pupils move through the school.
- Additional sports funding is used well to support the school's long-standing commitment to encouraging sporting achievement and healthy lifestyles. Teachers are developing their skills by working alongside a physical education specialist and experienced coaches. Pupils, including those with special educational needs who may otherwise not participate, enjoy a wide range of sports clubs and competitions.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. All staff, whatever their role, are clear about the procedures for notifying designated staff of any concerns they should have about a pupil. Any serious concerns about a child's safety or well-being are passed on to external agencies promptly. If in doubt, senior leaders are quick to seek advice.
- Until recently, the school was in the local authority's 'light touch' category. This school year, advisers have provided useful support to review the teaching of writing and training and support for staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Key policies, such as those that deal with pupils' safety, are reviewed regularly. Governors know how teaching is monitored and what the headteacher will do if there are any concerns. They have agreed the procedures for reviewing teachers' pay, linking it to how effective their teaching is, and satisfy themselves that additional money such as the pupil premium and sport funding is used well. Governors are well aware of the dip in pupils' achievement in writing. They are ambitious for the school and recognise they need to be better prepared to hold senior leaders to account for this aspect of the school's work. They have had training to look at the school's performance data in more depth and the questions they should ask. They have reorganised committees so that every governor is involved in discussions about standards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire believe the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved, and rightly so. Generally, pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and need little reminding to stay on task in lessons. Occasionally, they do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work or their concentration wavers if they do not understand what they have to do.
- Pupils appreciate the need for rules and have learnt to treat others with respect, regardless of any differences. This is evident in their good behaviour around school and in the playground, and the way they are polite and considerate to each other, staff and visitors.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents and carers are virtually unanimous in their view that their child is safe and happy at school. Pupils feel safe. They are taught how to look after themselves, and others, in a range of situations including when using the internet. Pupils receive first-aid training in Year 6.
- Pupils are well aware of the different forms that bullying can take. They use the acronym 'STOP' (several times on purpose) to help them remember the difference between bullying and falling out. Pupils feel that bullying is rare, but are confident that teachers will sort out any problems should they occur.
- The school's work to improve attendance, making it clear to parents and carers what is an acceptable reason for absence and what is not, has been successful. Taking account of recent bouts of illness, attendance is above average. Any problems with punctuality or unexplained absences are followed up promptly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching ensures that most pupils make good progress over time.
- Inspectors often saw pupils learning well. Where this was the case, teachers' strong subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils were combined to good effect. Lessons were well structured, using a range of activities to capture pupils' interest. Pupils made good progress because the mix of teaching new knowledge and skills and opportunities for them to practise what they were learning was right.
- In the best lessons, clear explanations and skilful questioning helped to develop pupils' understanding. Teachers monitored pupils' learning carefully and adjusted teaching accordingly to address misunderstandings or to provide further challenge. Expectations of the most able pupils were high. For example, they were challenged to apply their knowledge to solve mathematical problems or to improve the quality of their writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong. Teachers are accomplished at developing pupils' understanding and providing appropriate opportunities for them to master their skills and apply them to solving problems.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught systematically from the word go. By the end of Year 1, the very large majority of pupils have the early reading and spelling skills they need. The teaching of writing has improved this school year. In lessons, teachers model the writing process to develop pupils' understanding. Handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught methodically. Teachers check pupils' writing skills regularly so that they know exactly what to teach next.
- Teaching assistants generally provide effective support for the pupils they are directed to work with. This is because they have been well trained and teachers share with them what they want pupils to learn.
- On occasions, the teaching seen during the inspection was not as effective. Where this was the case, the pace of learning slowed because teachers did not use questioning as effectively to check on pupils' understanding. They did not notice pupils who were confused. Sometimes, the most able pupils were expected to complete the same tasks as their classmates before moving on to more challenging activities.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers make helpful comments to show pupils what they have achieved and how their work could be even better. Pupils are not, however, always routinely given time to respond to comments and improve their work while it is fresh in their mind.
- Homework is used effectively to support teaching in class and to encourage good learning habits. A few parents or carers feel pupils receive too much homework. Inspectors found that where this was the case, parents and carers were often spending more than the recommended time on activities with their child.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards at age 11 are high because pupils make good progress at all stages in school.
- Typically, children join the school with skills at levels below those expected for their age. The large majority are well prepared for more formal lessons by the time they leave the Reception class. By age seven, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2 consistently exceed national figures.
- Standards at age 11 are usually high. Without fail, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics are well above average. The most able pupils achieve well in these subjects because teachers usually make sure that teaching challenges them.
- Achievement in writing was not as high in 2013 and 2014 as in the past. In particular, fewer pupils than might be expected reached the higher levels at the end of Year 2 or Year 6. Training for staff and regular checks on pupils' skills have significantly improved progress so far this school year.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well because the school ensures that teaching assistants are trained to provide the right balance of support and encouraging pupils to do the work for themselves. The same is true for those pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates is closing. By the time they leave Year 6, disadvantaged pupils' achievement compares favourably with that of others of the same age. In 2014, pupils eligible for additional funding reached the same levels in reading and mathematics as their classmates and were about three months ahead in writing. Their attainment in reading and writing was the same as other pupils' nationally. In mathematics, they were about seven months ahead.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years leader provides strong direction for the staff team. There is no complacency. Plans are in place to maintain and improve already effective practice.
- The school's attention to safety and well-being is as evident in the Reception classes as anywhere else in school. Children are happy and respectful of one another. Provision for children with specific needs is carefully planned and their progress monitored.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is characterised by an infectious enthusiasm and purposeful, fun activities. In 'funky fingers' sessions children compete against others and their own personal best in games which develop the control they need for using a pencil. Children clearly enjoy learning. Assessment of their progress is thorough and accurate.
- Children join the Reception classes with a range of skills, knowledge and experience of early years education. Typically, what they know and can do is less than that expected for their age. Children of all abilities make rapid gains in learning during their first year in school. For example, children who were starting to form letters in the autumn when they joined are already writing in sentences. The large majority of children develop the reading, writing and mathematical skills they need by the time they move to Year 1.

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 | 110319 |
| Local authority | Buckinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 453381 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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|--|------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 418 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Ian Foster |
| Headteacher | Mrs Jill Watson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26–27 April 2007 |
| Telephone number | 01628 662913 |
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