

Larkhill Primary School

Wilson Road, Larkhill, Salisbury SP4 8QB

Inspection dates

12–13 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This a school that requires improvement

- The school's system for assessing and monitoring the progress for groups of pupils requires further improvement so that leaders and governors can quickly gain a clear picture of the progress of all classes and groups.
- Pupils who did not reach high standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are not making the accelerated progress necessary to catch up.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' writing. As a result, standards for writing are not as high as for other subjects, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- The presentation of work in pupils' books is not consistently good.
- Middle leaders are not yet using assessment information to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the last inspection the governing body has been strengthened, and now offers good support and challenge to this improving school.
- Pupils make good progress in the Reception class due to good teaching and well-planned activities.
- The teaching of reading is a strong feature of Larkhill School. Early reading skills are taught effectively, and this leads on to high standards in reading throughout the school.
- Many pupils join Larkhill throughout the year as their parents move with the army. These pupils are welcomed and settle quickly and their needs, both academic and social, are met very well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good both in school and at playtimes. They usually pay attention well in lessons and are keen to learn. They are polite to adults and cooperate well with each other.
- All pupils are well-looked-after. They feel safe and secure in school, and arrangements to keep them safe are good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the way the school assesses, monitors and records pupils' progress, and how it uses this information to improve outcomes for pupils, by:
 - building a secure evidence base that can be easily used to identify strengths and weaknesses
 - using assessment information to intervene quickly if progress slows in particular classes or subjects
 - challenging teachers if assessment information indicates that pupils are not making fast enough progress, or if moderation of work indicates that assessment is not accurate
 - ensuring that middle leaders have a clear understanding of the assessment information, and use this to hold teachers to account.

- Build on the recent improvements in writing for all pupils, but in particular the higher achieving pupils, by:
 - teachers ensuring that they have consistently high expectations of what their pupils can achieve
 - leaders closely monitoring standards in writing, and intervening swiftly when progress is not fast enough.

- Improve the presentation of work in pupils' books so that it is consistently good across classes and subjects, by:
 - insisting on high standards of handwriting throughout the school
 - ensuring that mathematics work is clearly set out.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and recently appointed deputy headteacher work well as a team and are making changes to improve the school. However, some changes are recent and have not yet fully impacted on the school.
- The school collects a great deal of assessment information about its pupils, and this is used well to identify support for individuals. However, the school's system for tracking the progress of classes or groups of pupils requires improvement in order for strengths and weaknesses to be quickly identified, and changes swiftly implemented.
- While leaders have successfully addressed the former low attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, they have not yet ensured that pupils who previously fell behind are making the accelerated progress necessary to enable them to catch up.
- Leaders have not yet managed to significantly improve the standard of writing of the most-able pupils.
- The role of middle leaders is being developed and they are starting to take more responsibility for improving the school. They are enthusiastic, supportive of the changes made by senior leaders, and they relish their new responsibilities. Middle leaders are already supporting their colleagues in their areas of expertise; however, they are not yet using the school's assessment information analytically in order to hold colleagues to account for their pupils' progress.
- The headteacher, supported by the governing body, manages teachers' performance appropriately, and pay awards are only made when warranted by good performance. Teachers' professional development is linked to the school's priorities as well as improving the individual's teaching practice.
- Senior leaders take responsibility for ensuring that the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in school make good progress. The additional funding is spent appropriately on providing additional support, and as a result disadvantaged pupils are achieving well.
- Senior leaders have ensured that those responsible for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are well trained, and able to support other staff to ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The school has specific challenges because of the high number of pupils who arrive and leave within the school year. The school deals with this very well; pupils are quickly assessed, and if extra help is required it is given. Pupils whose parents are in the armed forces are well supported; these pupils have their own 'eBluey' club which encourages regular contact with parents away on deployment, and the popular Fijian Club which also welcomes non-Fijians.
- The school is sensitive to the needs of pupils who are new to the school or the country. For example, staff ensure that pupils who cannot yet achieve well in reading or writing in English are given the opportunity to feel successful in mathematics, or show their knowledge in other subjects.
- Pupils enjoy a broad, balanced curriculum. Some subjects are taught through topics, while others, including English and mathematics, are taught as discrete subjects. The inspectors found pupils to be enthusiastic about their learning because the school ensures that the National Curriculum is taught in an engaging way. Pupils enjoy the after school clubs which offer a variety of sports, and there are also opportunities for choir and craft activities.
- British values are embedded throughout the school and planned into the curriculum. The school links these to the school's own values of respect, achievement, endeavour, courage and honour which are displayed around the school. Pupils understand the principles of democracy and have the opportunity to vote, for example, for school council members. Pupils learn about British culture, they visit the local church and nearby Stonehenge, and are aware of national institutions like the monarchy and the armed forces. They take responsibility and contribute to the school community; for example the school council writes an action plan and contributes to the school's improvement plan.
- The school benefits from having pupils from a variety of countries; this enables pupils to meet and work with others from different backgrounds and learn to treat each other with respect. Parents of Fijian pupils come into school to share their culture, and this is enjoyed and appreciated by staff and pupils. A recent visit from a theatre group resulted in the whole school learning how the Cinderella story appears in different forms around the world, leading to pupils learning about and celebrating different cultures.
- The government's sport funding is used appropriately to train teachers to improve expertise and to give pupils the opportunity to try new activities and take part in competitive events. However, the school does not monitor the impact of the spend; for example, it is not aware of whether disadvantaged groups, or those

who would particularly benefit from activity, are participating.

- The school has the confidence of parents and carers. There were only a small number of responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. However, the large majority of those who responded were happy with the school and would recommend it to other parents. The inspectors also spoke to 12 parents in the playground before school. Nearly all were happy with the education their child receives, with some commenting positively about the school leadership, how well their children are looked after, and how the school communicates with them well.
- The staff are all very positive about all aspects of the school. They are proud to work there and consider that the school has improved since the previous inspection.

■ The governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection there has been a review of governance. This has helped the governing body to undertake its role more effectively, to ask probing questions and to challenge the school's leaders. The governing body has benefited from having new members who bring considerable expertise, including in the leadership of schools.
- Governors visit the school regularly to monitor progress. They have undertaken data training which is enabling them to hold the school leaders to account for pupils' progress. They work well with senior leaders to identify areas of weaknesses and develop plans to address them.
- The governing body fulfils its duties well. They oversee performance management, ensuring that pay is related to performance. They check that the pupil premium grant and the forces grant are spent appropriately to support pupils and raise attainment.
- The school's finances are managed well with the school business manager working closely with the governors to plan for the future.
- All governors have undertaken training, and the governor responsible for safeguarding and special educational needs has had additional training. The governing body is working effectively with senior leaders to improve the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All adults, governors and staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe, and what they need to do if they have concerns. These concerns are always followed up, and the school has the confidence of parents and pupils that pupils will be kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not all teachers have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve, particularly in writing. While teachers assess pupils' work regularly and use this information when planning lessons, the inspectors found that assessment in writing was not always accurate.
- In some classes, teachers are not ensuring that pupils who have fallen behind are catching up quickly enough.
- Not all teachers insist on good handwriting or mathematics work being clearly presented.
- Good teaching in the Reception class ensures that children get off to a good start at Larkhill. Activities are well planned to develop children's skills and knowledge, and the clear routines help children to become independent. Staff have high expectations and the children work and play purposefully and cooperatively.
- Phonics is well taught, and the teaching of reading is systematic and has a high priority in the school. Parents are shown how to support their child with reading. They appreciate that books are changed regularly, and their child's progress in reading is carefully monitored.
- The standard of marking is good, and pupils know what they need to do to make their work better. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to respond to the teachers' comments to improve their work.
- Teachers plan interesting activities resulting in pupils engaging well with their learning. Pupils told the inspectors that they enjoy their lessons and that teachers plan interesting work for them.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are well taught. Two enthusiastic special needs coordinators work closely with teachers and support staff to ensure that pupils' needs are met.
- The school is very successful in ensuring that pupils who arrive at the school part way through the year are quickly assessed and taught at the appropriate level. Extra support is given, if required, and pupils who are not fluent in English are well supported.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and they enjoy their lessons. They are confident to 'have a go' and to ask for help if they need it.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, but that when it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively. That view is shared by parents. The bullying policy is written in 'child friendly' language, and pupils were able to tell the inspector about the different types of bullying. They know what to do should this occur and are confident that the headteacher will deal with it effectively.
- There are good arrangements to support forces families. The school is quick to offer support if required; while this mainly comes from the emotional literacy support assistant, all teachers and leaders are sensitive to pupils' specific needs.
- The arrangements for keeping pupils safe are good. The whole staff takes responsibility for pupils' welfare, and all pupils know who to speak to if they have concerns. The school has good procedures, for example communicating with previous schools about vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, including when online. They have visits from the police and the fire service to reinforce the safety message.
- All staff and governors have had safeguarding training. All adults spoken to understand their responsibilities, and what to do if they have concerns.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils are attentive and engage well; they are keen to put up their hands to answer questions. Low-level disruptive behaviour is rare.
- Pupils usually behave sensibly around the school and at playtimes and lunchtimes. For example, they pass through doors sensibly with no pushing. They open doors for adults, and greet them with big smiles and either a 'good morning' or occasionally a 'hello, who are you?'
- Pupils told an inspector that they behave well. This view is shared by parents and staff who agree that behaviour is good.
- Attendance is slightly below the national average. However, considering the particular circumstances of parents being deployed away from home or granted leave at unusual times, the school does well to keep this to a minimum. Any request for authorised absence is carefully considered by the headteacher before being granted, ensuring a good balance between educational and family needs. There have been no exclusions from the school for several years.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception class. Despite joining the school with skills and knowledge lower than expected for their age, they quickly catch up; by the time they leave the Reception class a higher proportion of children have reached a good level of development than is found in most schools nationally. Observations by an inspector support the school's view that high standards are likely to continue next year.
- The effective teaching of early reading skills has resulted in a larger than average proportion of pupils successfully completing the phonics screening check.
- The standards reached by pupils at the end Key Stage 1 have been low in recent years, and the progress made by the most-able children between leaving the Reception class and the end of Key Stage 1 was slow. The 2015 results were slightly better, but the results for reading and mathematics remained significantly lower than those of other schools. These pupils are now in Year 3, and perusal of work in their books indicates that they are not yet making the accelerated progress needed to catch up.
- The school's leaders have successfully taken steps to address the previously low standards at the end of Key Stage 1, and they were able to show evidence that the current Year 2 pupils are making better progress and that results in 2016 are likely to be improved.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015, pupils made good progress in mathematics and reading, with the standards reached being above other schools for reading and slightly below for mathematics. There was less progress in writing, with standards being significantly below other schools. While there has been overall improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the standard expected for their age in writing, the most-

able pupils did not reach the highest levels. The school's predictions for 2016 indicate an improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels in writing, but this is not yet evident in pupils' books.

- Because of the good support they receive, mobile pupils (that is pupils who join the school after the beginning of Year 5 – usually pupils whose parents are in the armed forces) reach similar standards to other pupils in the year group.
- The largest minority group of Fijian pupils make good progress and reach levels similar to the other pupils.
- There are only a small number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group, but taken together they make good progress, particularly in reading.
- Disabled pupils or those with special educational needs (SEN) receive good support and make good progress from their different starting points. The progress of pupils receiving SEN support was significantly better than similar pupils nationally. Pupils who are working at a level lower than expected for their age, but who do not have special educational needs are also identified by the special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) and extra help is given.
- The most-able pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in mathematics and reading, but less than expected progress in writing.
- By the time they leave Larkhill, pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who are well prepared to move on to the next stage in their education.

Early years provision

is good

- Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge lower than is typical for their age, particularly in their spoken language skills. They quickly catch up, and by the time they join Key Stage 1 a larger proportion of children have reached a good level of development than is found in most schools.
- When children join the class, the staff quickly assess what the children already know, and plan lessons and activities to move their learning on.
- The very small number of disadvantaged children are well supported; for example by reading daily with an adult or by the school supplying any equipment needed, like book bags and extra reading materials. If attendance is poor, this is quickly followed up by staff.
- Whole-group activities are well taught, leading to good progress. For example, an inspector saw children being taught to order numbers and recognise numerals. The teacher had planned a series of linked activities; there was some sitting and listening, but also active learning, writing numbers in the air and finding the correct numeral and placing it on a number line. Engagement in the lesson was very high.
- Later in the morning, children chose from a range of activities that were based on books the class had been sharing. The inspector saw children making boats for toy penguins; children were encouraged to discuss whether they thought their boat was big enough, and then compare the penguin and boat, thus developing mathematical language. Another group was retelling the story using small toys; adults encouraged children to explain what was happening, thus extending language skills.
- Children are confident and enjoy being helpful; for example, they are keen to help put equipment away when the 'tidy up music' is played.
- As writing is a focus of the school, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to write, with attractive writing materials available for each activity which children are encouraged to use.
- Parents told the inspectors that arrangements for their children to start school were very good, with the result that they settled quickly. Parents are encouraged to contribute to children's school records, and they can access their child's records online. Communication between school and home is good.
- Leadership of the Reception classes is good with the leader planning for further improvement. She is starting to involve all staff in planning, and has arranged training so that all Reception staff use high-quality questioning to develop children's language.
- The good foundation children receive in the Reception class means that pupils are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children's safety has a high priority, as it has throughout Larkhill School.

School details

Unique reference number	126202
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10002409

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Toby Harden
Headteacher	Stephen Norton
Telephone number	01980 652318
Website	www.larkhill.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@larkhill.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 November 2013

Information about this school

- Larkhill is slightly larger than the average primary school.
- It is situated next to The Royal Artillery Garrison, and 95% of pupils have parents serving in the armed forces.
- About three quarters of the pupils are of white British heritage, while approximately a tenth of pupils come from Fiji. The remaining pupils come from a variety of countries and ethnic groups. Most are in the United Kingdom for a limited time, ranging from weeks to years, because their parents are posted here to work with the army.
- Children start school full time in the September following their fourth birthday.
- Pupils are now taught in single year groups; this is a recent change as until 2015 some pupils were taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are higher than that found in most schools nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than that found in most schools.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection, the governing body has had a review of its work, has undertaken training and strengthened the team by including governors who have a wide range of experience and considerable expertise in education.
- A new deputy headteacher has been recently appointed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons. One of these was a joint observation with the deputy headteacher.
- An inspector met pupils to find out their views about work, behaviour and safety around the school.
- Meetings were held with middle leaders, governors, parents, a representative from the local authority and the school's advisers.
- The school's own documents were checked including those for safeguarding and attainment and progress.
- The inspector took account of 16 responses from parents to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and spoke to 12 parents. They also took account of 31 responses from staff.

Inspection team

Janet Maul, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Marion Borland	Ofsted Inspector
Ken Bryan	Ofsted Inspector

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