

Lodge Farm Primary School

Mobbsbury Way, Chells, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 0HP

Inspection dates

9–10 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders have worked with passion and skill to bring about improvements in the school. As a result, the quality of education has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
- Leaders have successfully developed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, teachers plan learning that is well matched to the interests and capabilities of pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils make good progress across the curriculum, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils have access to a broad range of extra-curricular clubs, which include good opportunities to participate in sporting activities.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff and governors are vigilant in maintaining pupils' safety and welfare. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, including when using the internet.
- Children in the early years setting make good progress from their differing starting points.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to use their best presentation or handwriting. Consequently, not all pupils take pride in their work.
- Teaching assistants make an important contribution to the progress that pupils make, particularly those pupils who need additional support.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good and sometimes better progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics do not evaluate the impact of their work with enough precision.
- Not all teachers set the highest expectations of what pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities can achieve.
- Since the previous inspection the effectiveness of governance has improved considerably. Governors carry out their duties well.
- Leaders have addressed previous weaknesses in phonics teaching. Pupils now make good progress in lessons.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities can achieve
 - all teachers having the highest expectations of presentation across the curriculum
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all subject leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of their work with the same precision and effectiveness that is shown by leaders of English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, co-headteacher, governors and other senior leaders have worked successfully to improve outcomes for pupils. These leaders, well supported by all adults in the school, have ensured that the quality of education has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Leaders have ensured that the school's value and aims of 'learning in mind, community at heart' run through the school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders' planning for school improvement is precise and effective. The school's 'single plan' focuses on the correct priorities for improvement. Leaders regularly monitor the impact of actions taken, which has led to sustained improvement.
- Middle leaders are effective in their work. They take decisive actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, the mathematics subject leader worked collaboratively with middle leaders in other schools to create the school's 'MRE' system which provides pupils with opportunities to model strategies, reinforce concepts and enrich their learning. However, some leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics do not yet precisely monitor the impact of their work.
- School leaders develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils take part in enrichment activities such as twinning with a school in Africa, assemblies and the work of the school's 'Junior Leadership Team'. Pupils are respectful and responsible as a result of the experiences that are provided.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and equips pupils well for the next stages of education. Leaders keep the curriculum under constant review and make appropriate amendments in response to pupils' needs. For example, leaders recently introduced whole-class violin lessons.
- Leaders use the physical education sports funding well. They have employed a specialist sports coach who is helping to develop pupils' key skills. Pupils develop their love of sport and fitness through extra-curricular clubs which encourage pupils to try new and different sports, such as lacrosse, cheerleading and korfbal (a Dutch version of netball and basketball). There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to experience sports.
- School leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to support pupils during whole-class teaching, small-group work and one-to-one tuition. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading and writing. Leaders have reviewed the impact of the funding for previous years and have implemented a new mathematics intervention programme to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- The headteacher manages teachers' performance effectively. She provides teachers with clear targets which are regularly monitored. The headteacher measures the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and against the areas identified in the school's single plan. This allows her to make accurate recommendations regarding pay progression.
- Leaders at all levels have engaged with the effective support offered by the local authority in addressing those issues identified at the previous inspection. Leaders have developed strong relationships through the 'improvement educational partnership'. This

joint working between the school and another local school has allowed senior and middle leaders to develop their skills by sharing effective practice.

- School staff tackle any issues of discrimination well and foster good relationships with parents. This promotes equality of opportunity and contributes to a harmonious and friendly school.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and make good use of opportunities to develop their understanding and knowledge of British values. Pupils are encouraged to become members of the 'Junior Leadership Team' and elect members from each class. Pupils informed inspectors that the school helped them to 'respect others, listen to others and not to break the law'.
- Parents appreciate leaders', teachers' and support staff's work. The vast majority of parents are positive about the school. As one parent said, 'the school helps my children develop socially as well as academically', and the school is 'an excellent environment for our children to grow and learn'. However, a minority of parents would like more information provided about their child's education.

Governance of the school

- Governors, under the skilful leadership of the experienced chair of governors, have greatly improved their effectiveness. They responded very well to the findings of the external review of their practice. As a result, governance is now a strength of the school.
- Governors are well trained and put their improved skills to good use. For example, individual governors lead aspects of the school's work well, such as in relation to data, training and safeguarding. They now have defined job titles, for example, 'data champions', and governors have individual development plans to increase their own skillset. As a result, there is now a spread of effective leadership across the governing body.
- Governors hold leaders to account for the progress pupils make. Governors challenge staff performance through effective performance management systems.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained in the necessary aspects of child protection, including the government's 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being.
- The headteacher and co-headteacher share the responsibilities for safeguarding and keep detailed records of any safeguarding concerns that are shared with the relevant external agencies. The school has developed a 'story so far' filing system that complements the case chronology, which is kept up to date. This enables external agencies and school staff to quickly determine what actions have taken place. Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare and challenge the appropriate authorities where necessary.
- Parents say that the school keeps their children safe and inspection evidence supports these views.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have made improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment a central part of their work. Observations of learning and scrutinies of pupils' books show that teaching is supporting the good progress pupils are now making.
- Teachers provide effective learning opportunities and questions that closely match the needs of the pupils. For example, in a Year 5 class a teacher's effective questions enabled a group of pupils to understand place value for five-digit numbers.
- Teachers provide learning environments that are generally well equipped to support positive learning. Pupils make use of vibrant displays that provide good prompts to help their learning. These include mathematics and English displays as well as a range of colourful and stimulating curriculum displays. Pupils from a range of classes were keen to explain their 'pegs of pride' displays, which showcase examples of work across the curriculum.
- Teachers and teaching assistants successfully provide pupils with different challenges and interesting topics to explore, such as the United States presidential election which was engaging Year 6 pupils at the time of the inspection. Teachers made good use of pupils' enthusiasm, allowed the pupils to explore their views and adjusted their learning activities around pupils' interests.
- Teachers use good subject knowledge to plan learning that addresses previous weaknesses in phonics teaching. All staff use correct pronunciation which supports pupils to make good progress in phonics. Teachers and teaching assistants use a range of techniques effectively to support pupils' phonic development. For example, in one Year 1 class, the most able pupils were challenged well and asked to spell words beginning with 'wh'. The level of challenge for this group of pupils increased their knowledge of phonics and supported their spelling effectively.
- Pupils talk excitedly about their learning. For example, a Year 6 pupil talked enthusiastically about mathematics and said, 'We learn new things every day.' Pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about books. Pupils who struggle to read have very good support to practise their skills and are proud of the progress they make. Pupils say that they 'love guided reading' and this passion for reading is evident across the school.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to lessons, particularly for those pupils who need additional support in their learning. Teaching assistants work well to support these pupils, using appropriate teaching resources and asking questions effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Teachers have a high expectation of presentation for work in English and mathematics but this is not always shown in other subjects. As a result, pupils' handwriting skills and the presentation of their work are not consistently good.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff and governors are successful in ensuring that the school provides a safe and nurturing environment in which pupils can flourish and succeed. As a result, pupils are

friendly, thoughtful and respectful.

- Pupils develop positive relationships at Lodge Farm Primary School. For example, they play an active and effective part in the school's work to prevent inappropriate behaviour. 'Peer mediators' work alongside members of school staff to identify and support pupils who are isolated or experiencing difficulty on the playground.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in and out of school, including when using the internet. Pupils confidently told inspectors about e-safety and were keen to share their understanding, telling inspectors 'not to share personal details with anyone online' and 'to keep our passwords safe'. Teachers promote e-safety on a regular basis.
- Pupils' attendance is high and they told inspectors that they enjoy attending school. School attendance staff are proactive in supporting families where attendance becomes an issue and they work positively with families and pupils to promote good attendance. Staff promote positive attendance well and celebrate high attendance, for example by awarding certificates.
- Leaders place a high profile on developing pupils' decision-making skills and providing them with opportunities to contribute to many aspects of the school. For example, the pupils planned an event to raise money for school playground equipment. Pupils feel that being a member of the Junior Leadership Team 'builds up your confidence and makes you become responsible'.
- Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast club. They have good fun and enjoy the wide range of games to play. Staff organise active indoor games for the pupils as well as providing other independent activities.
- Parents agreed that children are well looked after and kept safe at the school. Parents' comments included, 'the school is an excellent environment for our children to grow and learn,' and 'I am impressed with the way the school has helped my child to settle into school.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They follow staff instructions quickly and are eager, attentive learners. Pupils settle promptly to their work and are supportive of each other in their learning. Teachers use a range of strategies that have a positive impact on pupils' good behaviour. For example, staff have developed characters such as 'Mr Resilience', which helps pupils to become more effective learners.
- Pupils understand the value of respectful, tolerant behaviour. They understand the school's traffic light system in detail. Pupils sign up to a 'behaviour wheel' and are encouraged to be good 'Lodge Farmers'. The impact of this work is evident in and around the school for the vast majority of pupils.
- Leaders act swiftly and effectively to keep thorough information about pupils' behaviour and incidents of bullying or racist comments. Timely intervention regarding poor behaviour has a positive impact.
- Pupils generally move swiftly and cheerfully around the school site. Occasionally, some pupils do not pay as much attention as they should. Some pupils were observed during transitions between lessons acting incorrectly, but teachers were usually quick to re-engage these pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter Lodge Farm Primary School with starting points that are slightly below what is expected for their age. Leaders' effective actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have ensured that higher proportions leave having made progress that is at least good.
- In 2016, by the end of key stage 1, pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The number of pupils who achieved the expected standard and better than the expected standard was significantly higher than the national average.
- Pupils made good progress from their different starting points across key stage 2 in 2016. They achieved significantly higher than their peers nationally in assessments for reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress in writing, in particular, was extremely strong.
- Pupils make good progress in subjects across the curriculum, most notably in physical education, history, music and art. Teachers have the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve in almost all classes and subjects. Pupils are well prepared for future learning by the time they leave the school. For example, Year 4 pupils visit the local secondary school to develop further their scientific skills.
- The small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points. This is because staff know these children well and plan learning that is matched to their needs. Although these pupils make generally good progress from their starting points, some are capable of making even better progress. Occasionally, teachers' expectations of what pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities can achieve is not consistently high in all curriculum subjects.
- The most able pupils make good progress across the curriculum. This is because teachers provide an appropriate level of challenge to meet their needs. These pupils achieve particularly well in writing and mathematics. For example, a group of pupils were calculating percentages of numbers using decimal amounts.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points because of the effective support that they receive, particularly in key stage 1. Work in pupils' books, the school's own assessment information and pupils' achievements in lessons confirm that these pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- In 2016, Year 1 pupils did not achieve as well as expected in the phonics check. School leaders have taken swift and successful action to ensure that this is not repeated. Pupils' progress in phonics is now good because the teaching of phonics has improved significantly.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Staff work well together to develop children's sense of wonder and curiosity.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points. In 2015 and 2016 the proportion of children leaving the Reception class having attained a good level of development was above the national average. Children are well prepared for key stage 1.

- The majority of children start the early years with skills and abilities which are typically at, or a little below, those typical for their age. In recent years, a small number in each cohort have entered the school needing considerable support. Leaders ensure that these children's needs are assessed promptly and appropriate plans are put in place. Consequently, progress for these children is good.
- Leaders make sure that disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the appropriate level of adult support and are taught well. Consequently, these children make good progress and become enthusiastic learners.
- Staff provide a stimulating learning environment that is rich and varied for all children. Adults plan activities that capture the children's imagination and allow them to practise their skills. For example, children were enthusiastic about creating their repeating elephant patterns.
- Children have plenty of opportunities to explore the well-resourced outdoor area. They make enthusiastic use of a range of equipment that encourages them to build, create and explore new ideas. There are good opportunities for children to lead their own learning and make choices in their play. At times, children's progress slows because adults do not make the most of all opportunities to extend children's learning when their attention or interest reduces.
- Children are absorbed in their learning and are confident and enthusiastic learners. For example, several children were keen to show inspectors their muddy puddle and how high they could make the splashes go!
- Leaders provide many opportunities for parents to become actively involved in the children's learning. The recently introduced 'parent champions' are already having a positive impact on relationships and communications. Parents are well informed through the weekly newsletter which has suggestions for home learning and encourages parents to complete 'wow' cards to celebrate children's learning and achievements at home.
- Staff in the early years make sure that children are kept safe at all times. Staff keep their training up to date and use these skills to ensure that children's welfare is a priority.
- Children make good behaviour choices and respond to the school's routines well. They develop excellent relationships with each other and with the adults that support them. This promotes good learning.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the provision and are ambitious to improve it further. For example, they are aware of the importance of developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world further so have planned activities to support children's learning in this area. A recent 'autumn walk' was a success in developing children's understanding of leaves and trees.
- Children are well prepared for moving on to the next stage of their education because of effective transition systems between the Nursery and Reception classes. Leaders hold meetings with parents, visit other feeder nurseries and conduct home visits prior to children starting school. The on-site nursery enables close communication between early years staff, which ensures consistency for the children's learning and development.

School details

Unique reference number	132091
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10022973

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsey Butterworth
Headteacher & co-headteacher	Helen Turner & Sue Padfield
Telephone number	01438 236 600
Website	www.lodgefarm.herts.sch.uk/
Email address	head@lodgefarm.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Lodge Farm Primary School is larger than the average primary school.
- The early years provision comprises a Nursery class and two Reception classes. Children in the Nursery attend on a part-time basis.
- The school hosts a breakfast club which is led by an external company.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standard.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the pupils' learning in 24 lessons. They also made a number of short visits to lessons. A number of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met two groups of children to gain their views of the school as well as speaking to pupils informally. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, at the start of the school day and in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the following: assessments and records of pupil progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance; records of how teaching is managed and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the co-headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and five other governors. There was also a meeting with a local authority adviser.
- The inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the 35 pupil responses from the Ofsted pupil survey.

Inspection team

Joseph Figg, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Savill	Ofsted Inspector
Rod Warsap	Ofsted Inspector

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