

Langford Village Academy

Church Street, Langford, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 9QA

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal has ensured that there is a strong focus on improving teaching and learning leading to improving outcomes for pupils. She effectively delegates leadership throughout the school. All leaders are clear about their responsibilities, and have a proactive role in improving teaching and learning.
- Governors know the school well. They understand and are fully committed to their role in improving the quality of education. Governors are well informed about pupils' learning and hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement.
- The quality of teaching is good. A high proportion of pupils are currently producing work of a good standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to improve pupils' learning in lessons when working with individuals and small groups.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because the challenges they face are quickly identified, appropriate support is provided, and checks on their achievement are thorough and accurate.
- The well-designed curriculum enriches pupils' lives through a good range of engaging activities. Pupils learn important values such as tolerance, respect and thoughtfulness. This contributes strongly to effectively developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth.
- Pupils like school and attend regularly. They are confident and happy. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and are well cared for.
- Parents are supportive of the school, and appreciate the caring ethos and friendly, professional staff.
- Although teaching is effective, there are occasions when the most able pupils do not have the opportunity to apply their learned skills and the work they do is not challenging enough. As a result, the most able pupils do not always reach the higher standard of which they are capable.
- Early years provision is good. However, the outdoor learning environment is not yet fully developed to allow children to follow their interests, make choices and be as purposefully engaged as they could be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils have opportunities to apply their skills to challenging activities so that they achieve the best that they can.
- Improve the quality of provision in early years further by:
 - developing a high-quality outdoor learning environment that will consistently secure the best possible outcomes for all children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal works diligently to ensure that teaching and learning continue to improve. Her calm, clear and determined approach to leadership has resulted in better teaching and, consequently, most pupils making more rapid progress.
- The roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders have been strengthened so that all teachers make an effective contribution to school improvement. Leadership is shared widely and the different skills of individual staff are used well to secure improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Leaders at all levels are appropriately held to account by governors to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders, including governors, are accurate in their evaluation of what the school does well and what needs further improvement because they draw on evidence from a wide range of sources. For example, senior leaders regularly visit lessons and check the work in pupils' books to find out about learning in all classes. Governors scrutinise assessment information and talk with staff and pupils. From their evaluation of this broad evidence base, leaders develop accurate plans for further improvement.
- Leaders have developed an engaging curriculum of well-planned activities that capture the imagination of pupils and support the effective development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Topics often begin with a school visit, for example to a farm or the zoo, or visitors come into school to share resources such as museum artefacts related to a topic. These events help to stimulate pupils' imaginations, and as a result, pupils make meaningful connections across subjects and are motivated by the purpose of their work. Leaders have identified that the outdoor learning environment for early years needs developing further to enhance children's learning.
- Leaders effectively use the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Any barriers to learning are identified quickly and rapid intervention addresses areas of difficulty so that pupils receive appropriate help and are ready to learn. For example, targeted support in smaller teaching groups, and pastoral intervention from the family support worker. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. They reach similar standards to the other pupils in the school and sometimes outperform them. Disadvantaged pupils are now attaining more closely to other pupils nationally.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by the very knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator, (SENCo), ensures that funding is well spent. Highly personalised provision and close monitoring of pupils' progress ensure that teaching, including programmes of support, is well suited to pupils' needs. Consequently, these pupils achieve well.
- The primary physical education and sport premium funding is used well. The enthusiastic physical education (PE) leader ensures that a wide range of sports clubs and activities are provided for pupils. Pupils' participation in sports has increased so that they are more active. The school employs specialist coaches to work alongside teachers. This has increased teachers' confidence to deliver high-quality PE lessons.

- Parents spoken with during the inspection, and their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, demonstrate that they value and support the school. One parent spoke for many by saying: 'Both my children have attended this school, both are happy and have progressed in their work. The staff are friendly, caring and supportive.'
- The trust is thorough in challenging the school to raise standards further, holding leaders to account for the achievement that pupils make, and setting targets to secure improved outcomes. It provides effective support to leaders and teachers through the involvement of an improvement partner. The school's improvement partner rigorously checks how well the school is performing, and the trust provides comprehensive training for staff in all aspects of school improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors play an integral role in improving the school. They have a high level of skill and professional expertise that they use well to inform and support the school's development. Governors understand the information they receive from the principal and other leaders, and use it to check the school's work and monitor the progress of actions against the priorities in the development plans.
- Governors are effective in monitoring how well pupils achieve. They closely scrutinise the performance of different pupil groups, including the disadvantaged. Governors ask challenging questions to hold leaders to account to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils, including those for whom additional funding is given.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff rightly place a high priority on ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Rigorous checks are carried out prior to making staff appointments. All staff and governors receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. This enables staff to adhere consistently to school policies and procedures.
- The school works closely with external agencies and initiates appropriate actions to ensure the safety of pupils. Records show a good level of rigour in pursuing the involvement of other agencies for vulnerable pupils who may be at risk.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who completed online questionnaires during the inspection agreed that pupils are safe and well cared for. One parent commented for many by saying: 'The teachers are excellent and they really care about the pupils.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and their teaching assistants are an effective team. Teachers plan closely together so that pupils in different classes but in the same year group, enjoy the same interesting and relevant lessons.

- Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and ensure that classrooms are generally well ordered and calm. Adults lead by example and demonstrate high standards in the skills they are teaching to pupils. This, alongside skilful questioning, enables teachers to identify misconceptions quickly and highlight opportunities for pupils to improve their learning.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning because they receive effective training which they apply well to support pupils. Consequently, pupils are well supported to make strong progress in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive a high standard of tailored support from highly skilled staff. Pupils' work is carefully planned and they receive appropriate support and specialist resources to improve their learning. As a result, these pupils are able to fully access all aspects of the curriculum and achieve well in a range of subjects across the school.
- Leaders have focused on improving the teaching of phonics. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and comprehensive plans are in place to deliver interesting and appropriate phonics lessons. Teachers closely track pupils' progress and provide targeted support when necessary. This results in pupils of all abilities making strong progress in their knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds. Pupils accurately apply this knowledge when they write independently.
- Reading is taught well across the school. Pupils are generally enthusiastic and confident readers. Pupils were able to speak at length about their reading books and demonstrate clear understanding of what they had read.
- The teaching of writing has been a priority in the school's improvement plans. Teachers have received training to teach spelling, grammar and handwriting. As a result, pupils' handwriting is generally neat and correctly formed. Pupils' improving ability to write sustained pieces for a variety of reasons is evident in their work books.
- The teaching of mathematics is good because the leader responsible has ensured that all teachers appreciate the importance of pupils understanding the number system, mastering calculation skills, and applying these skills to solve a range of problems.
- Teachers' good understanding of what pupils know and can do ensures that they plan work that is generally matched well to pupils' different needs and abilities. However, sometimes the work is not demanding enough to enable the most able pupils to think for themselves. Pupils have limited opportunities to make choices and therefore develop confidence in their ability to apply the skills they have learned. Consequently, progress for the most able pupils is not always as rapid as it could be.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are confident and happy to talk to adults. One pupil told an inspector: 'All the teachers are really nice and they encourage you to do your best.'

- In all classes, pupils show respect, tolerance and kindness to each other to make this a welcoming and supportive school. They talk confidently about the school's values and how they use these values in different situations. For example, one pupil told an inspector: 'We have different values like determination. So if I struggle, I keep going then I can do it better than the last time.'
- Pupils understand and enjoy their assemblies. These occasions are well planned and make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence that staff will help them if they have a worry or concern.
- Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and also how to stay healthy. Pupils can talk about how to stay safe in a variety of situations including when using the internet.
- Pupils display growing levels of maturity as they move through the school. By Year 4, many are able to take on age-appropriate leadership roles such as house captains and sports leaders, to help and care for younger pupils.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to inspectors during the inspection, agreed that pupils are well looked after and safe at Langford Village Academy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons because of the high expectations of all staff. Pupils take responsibility for their behaviour and respond positively to the school's behaviour management system.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are well-supervised occasions that ensure that pupils can play and socialise happily together.
- School records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour are few. Even so, leaders still work to reduce them even further.
- Leaders take effective action to ensure that the few pupils with low attendance are appropriately well supported and challenged. The principal and family support worker diligently monitor why pupils are absent and follow up concerns with parents quickly. Leaders work closely with other external agencies, such as the education welfare officer, to ensure that any attendance concerns are addressed. As a result, attendance is at least in line with national figures, including for some of the most vulnerable pupils and disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children join the early years with skills that are often below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. However, because of the effective use of assessment, leaders ensure that children's specific and individual needs are identified

early. Children make good progress in the Reception Year. The number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is increasing over time, and in 2016 was just above the national average.

- In 2015 and 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 was below average. However, the school's current assessment information demonstrates that pupils are now making much better progress in phonics throughout the school. This is as a result of phonics being taught more systematically. Pupils are able to use their phonics skills accurately when reading books.
- In 2016, by the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard was broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, because of recent improvements in the quality of teaching, current pupils across the school are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books, accurate assessments and regular monitoring demonstrate that, as a result of effective teaching and individual support, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are being better equipped with the academic skills to be fully ready for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, learn as well as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because the additional funding for these pupils is used effectively to provide additional teaching and well-being support that ensures all disadvantaged pupils are academically and emotionally ready to learn.
- Expectations of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are high. The school identifies, and assesses, pupils' needs accurately and ensures that the support provided improves their learning. As a result, these pupils are currently making at least good progress in all subjects from their individual starting points.
- The most able pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school because teaching does not always ensure that they are challenged to do their best. As a result, some of the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable and consequently do not achieve as well as they could.

Early years provision

Good

- Children currently in the Reception classes are making more rapid progress than in previous years because teaching and leadership has improved. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been improving and is now in line with the national average. Consequently, children are being well prepared for Year 1.
- Staff ensure that children are safe and well cared for.
- Children enjoy the activities teachers plan for them and behave very well. Classroom routines are well established and children learn and play happily alongside, and with, each other. They take turns and share equipment well.
- Teaching is well matched to children's needs and children show a high level of interest and resolve to improve. For example, in a PE lesson, a class of Reception children

tenaciously mastered the technique of dribbling footballs between cones because of the teacher's clear demonstrations and positive encouragement. One child commented: 'I am not moving too quickly and looking hard at the ball, so I am getting better.'

- Teachers and teaching assistants use observations to precisely assess how well children are learning and developing. They quickly recognise when children need additional support and put this in place. This ensures that children make good progress from their starting points.
- Parents feel included in their children's learning through the regular updates they receive, and special events such as open afternoons when they have the opportunity to visit the school and look at their children's learning. Teachers welcome the comments from parents about children's key achievements outside of school, and, consequently, the partnership between home and school is strong.
- Parents are pleased with the early years provision, and told inspectors that their children settle quickly and are achieving well.
- Teachers ensure that children have opportunities to engage both in activities led by adults and tasks that they can choose for themselves. Indoors the learning areas are welcoming and stimulating. The well-organised resources are generally accessible so that children can investigate and explore their own ideas. However, in the outdoor areas, some of the equipment is in poor condition and not always stored tidily. This means that children cannot access the resources they need.
- Leaders identify that the outdoor learning areas are less well developed and do not yet offer children a consistently good range of experiences, with fewer opportunities than inside to select activities in order to follow their own interests.

School details

Unique reference number	140835
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10031335

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Fiona Constant
Principal	Lyn Rouse
Telephone number	01462 629 000
Website	www.langfordvillageacademy.org.uk
Email address	langford-info@bestacademies.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Langford Village Academy is a smaller than the average-sized primary school and converted to an academy in June 2014. The school is part of the Bedfordshire multi-academy trust (BEST).
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support, or who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is in line with the national average.
- The school is host to a class of pupils from a local special school. These pupils are not on the school's roll and the school has no responsibility for their education.

- The principal also leads a second school in a local partnership, spending half her week at Langford Village Academy.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended an assembly. Several of the observations were carried out jointly with the principal.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, the vice-principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, the SENCo, the early years leader, the newly qualified teacher, the vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors, the CEO and a senior member of the trust.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in early years, Years 1 and 4 reading. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents including: assessment information; minutes from the governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 27 parent texts, and 28 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire. They also spoke to some parents before and after school, and during the inspection.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynsey Holzer

Ofsted Inspector

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