

Larkfields Infant School

Coronation Road, Nuthall, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG16 1EP

Inspection dates

12–13 July 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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The cornerstone of this successful school is the strong relationships between the staff and the pupils.
- The pupils become confident learners quickly, starting in the early years, because they know that the staff always listen to them carefully and that they are cared for well.
- The pupils make good progress, particularly in the early years. By the time that they leave the school, they reach levels that are broadly average and sometimes a little above. The teachers develop the pupils' sense of curiosity well. They choose topics for learning and activities that capture the pupils' interest. The teaching is at its most effective in the early years.
- The headteacher, other leaders and the governing body have established a strong ethos at the school, which gives a high priority to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This makes a powerful contribution to the pupils' positive attitudes to life and to learning.
- The pupils' progress in mathematics was low in 2016. This was because the school's curriculum did not provide the pupils with enough of the opportunities that they needed in order to develop the required skills. The school's approach to assessing the pupils' attainment and progress is more effective in the early years than it is in key stage 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the curriculum for mathematics provides enough challenging opportunities to develop the pupils' reasoning skills and for them to apply their mathematical knowledge.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in key stage 1, by:
 - replicating throughout the school the meticulous practice evident in the early years in assessing the pupils' attainment and progress during lessons
 - ensuring that additional support is provided to speed up the progress of pupils who have not understood the intended learning and of those who have found the learning easy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The senior leaders have established a strong ethos at the school. That is apparent in the respect and courtesy that is shown routinely by the pupils and the staff throughout the school and the strong climate for learning evident in the classrooms, corridors and the well-kept grounds; the school is an attractive and welcoming place to be, which contributes greatly to the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and to life.
- The school's stimulating curriculum is broad, well balanced and provides the pupils with rich and varied experiences. Nowhere is this more evident than in the wide-ranging approach to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has used the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium to extend the range of opportunities available to the pupils in a variety of ways, including participating in a PE festival with another school. The pupils enjoy the sports and other activities; a climbing wall in the school playground is, for example, obviously a hit with the pupils.
- The senior leaders identify areas for improvement accurately and take carefully planned action to deal with them. That has meant, for example, a rapid response to the issues with the pupils' progress in mathematics in 2016.
- The leaders ensure that improvements, such as those on which they have embarked for mathematics, are accompanied by good training and development opportunities for the staff. The training and development links well with an effective approach to managing the performance of the staff.
- The school has used the pupil premium funding in a range of ways, particularly to provide additional support for the eligible pupils, including in the early years, based on detailed knowledge of the individuals. This has enabled the children in the early years to make good progress. The pupils' progress in key stage 1 has varied from year to year and the school has not always been able to build consistently on the gains made in some years.
- The senior leaders have established very strong relationships with parents. As a result, the parents express justifiably high levels of confidence in the school.
- The school promotes equalities well. The staff deal very sensitively with subjects such as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender matters, working closely with parents and in ways appropriate to the age of the pupils. As a result, the pupils show respect for social diversity and courtesy throughout the school.
- The school provides the pupils with many opportunities to learn about different peoples and cultures. For example, a very large and prominent display links several pupils currently at the school with their backgrounds in around 15 different countries across six continents.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are encouraged to share their experiences, for example singing foreign language songs during the school's 'Larkfields Got Talent' show.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is very active. It questions senior leaders extensively on a broad range of subjects and understands its responsibility to challenge the school's leaders.
- It maintains careful oversight of the school's work and finances, including the arrangements for safeguarding. It monitors the school's use of external funding, such as the pupil premium, and checks appropriately that decisions relating to the pay and progression of staff are related to successful performance.
- The governing body is kept well informed by detailed reports from the headteacher and through a programme of activities in which they work with the leaders to look at specific aspects of the school, including safeguarding.
- The governing body has ensured that the school's approach to promoting fundamental British values is planned carefully. The approach involves a sequence of relevant learning opportunities linked to each aspect, beginning in the early years. The governing body's evaluations of the attainment and progress of the pupils are not always as incisive as they could be, for example in relation to the extent to which pupils' attainment and progress have been more typically average over recent years than was the case at the time of last inspection

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The staff receive training regularly that keeps them up to date with government guidance and the sort of concerns to which they need to be alert. The staff are aware of the sort of things to look out for and know how and to whom they should report any concerns.
- The school completes detailed risk assessments for activities, such as a trip to Nottingham Castle, using a format provided by the local authority. The school works well with local agencies, so that pupils who may need additional help are able to get it. The designated leader makes sure that any files and relevant information are transferred to other schools when the pupils leave.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The teaching leads to secure gains in learning by the pupils in a range of subjects.
- The pupils produce work that is increasingly accurate.
- The teachers select topics for the pupils to work on that capture the pupils' interest. In the best examples seen during the inspection, this led to some high-quality work by the pupils. The bright and attractive classrooms and corridors are full of excellent artwork by the pupils. The inspectors were impressed by some very good writing by the pupils about tigers.
- The range of opportunities to learn about science and religious education has led to these being particularly popular subjects among the pupils.
- The teachers demonstrate clearly what they want the pupils to be able to do. This

helps the pupils to understand what is expected of them.

- The pupils are encouraged and helped to devise questions of their own, which the teachers then use skilfully to keep the pupils interested and to develop their learning.
- The teachers provide interesting opportunities for the pupils to learn, sometimes in groups and pairs. The opportunities add to the pupils' learning experiences and contribute effectively to developing their social skills and ability to work collaboratively.
- The teachers establish good foundations for the pupils' learning in lessons. They are alert to the pupils' levels of concentration. This results in the pupils being ready and able to learn and leads to productive work in the lessons.
- The teachers use phonics effectively to reinforce and to extend the pupils' reading skills.
- The pupils do not produce the best work of which they are capable often enough. That is particularly so for the most able pupils.
- In key stage 1, the teachers do not probe the answers provided by the most able pupils in lessons and in their books sufficiently to extend these pupils' learning, even when it is apparent that the pupils have understood readily what is being taught.
- The pupils' workbooks show that high standards of presentation are not demanded routinely, basic errors are not corrected consistently, and pupils who have missed aspects of the work do not catch up with what they have missed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The staff know the pupils well as individuals. Pupils who have particular needs, some of which are very sensitive and of a significant level, are provided with good support.
- The school has developed strong relationships with parents. Those relationships make an important contribution to the levels of care that the school provides for the pupils.
- The pupils feel safe and happy at the school. Appropriate steps are taken to keep the pupils safe, such as using high-visibility jackets when out on walks and teaching the pupils how to cross roads safely. Pupils raised no concerns with the inspectors about any form of bullying. The inspectors found no evidence that misbehaviour gets in the way of the pupils' learning, except in rare and individual cases.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The pupils are polite and show respect for each other and towards adults. Pupils from various backgrounds and ethnic groups work and play together harmoniously.
- They respond very quickly to instructions from the staff, both when outdoors during breaktimes and during lessons.
- The pupils value their education and the opportunities provided for them by the school.

- They develop a good sense of right and wrong; as one of them said to an inspector, 'We like to do the right thing.' Equally, they have an impish sense of humour!
- The pupils' attendance is above average. The level of persistent absence is low. The level of absence among disadvantaged pupils is higher than among other pupils at the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The pupils make steady, but not exceptional, progress in a range of subjects. The information held by the school, though yet to be confirmed, indicates that the lower than average proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in writing and in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2016 have improved significantly this year.
- The pupils develop good reading skills.
- The pupils develop a good grasp of phonics. The difference between disadvantaged pupils and others in phonics has been reducing over time, even as the proportion of other pupils reaching the required standard has increased. Untypically, this was not the case in 2016.
- The most able read suitably difficult books fluently. The less able pupils use their knowledge of phonics to break down words and put them back together, so that they are able to read the words, although they struggle at times with more complex sounds.
- The pupils do well in science.
- The pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of arithmetic. The school's curriculum has not provided enough opportunities for them to develop their mathematical reasoning and to apply their learning in different ways. Consequently, their progress in mathematics by the end of Year 2 in 2016 was well below average.
- The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are given careful attention. Their needs are identified at an early stage and the pupils are provided with effective additional support that enables them to catch up with particular aspects of their learning. As a result, the list of pupils identified as needing the support changes frequently. The disadvantaged pupils also receive carefully designed support, some paid for using the pupil premium, which helps them to catch up with other pupils with particular aspects of their learning. Overall, however, the school has not sustained every year the progress made in some years in reducing the differences in attainment between these pupils and others. The pupils are prepared well for the transition to their junior school, something that they approach with confidence and anticipation, even though they like their current school very much.

Early years provision

Good

- Increasingly, the children enter the early years unit with skill levels below those expected for their age. That is particularly so for the disadvantaged children.
- The children are exuberant, keen and proud to show their work. They demonstrate considerable desire to write, including the boys. The staff provide many opportunities to celebrate what the children have done, which serves to increase the children's desire

to learn.

- The knowledgeable and skilful leadership of the early years has resulted in approaches to assessment and teaching that are at the forefront of the school's improvement.
- The staff's approach to assessing the children's learning is meticulous. The staff ascertain the children's needs quickly, including for the disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They respond to those needs flexibly, so that the children make good gains in learning.
- The early years supports the needs of children with speech and language difficulties well. Children with autistic spectrum disorder are eased skilfully into learning with other children.
- The staff provide activities for the children that have a clear learning purpose. They are astute at looking for opportunities and diligent in taking action to extend the children's learning as the activities progress. As a result, the children are busy, purposeful in their approach and productive in their work.
- The staff demonstrate the language and skills that they expect the children to use and then get the children to use them. They do this subtly, but purposefully, supporting learning throughout the activities, so that the pupils make good progress consistently.
- The staff respond very well to what their assessments tell them about how the children are making progress, even during the course of an activity. Consequently, they adapt what is happening at the time, finding new ways to increase the learning or to correct errors and misconceptions. Alternatively, they plan something for the next day that taps into the interest and enthusiasm shown by the children. Like their peers, the disadvantaged pupils make good progress through the early years, but the difference between their attainment and that of their peers is still apparent by the time that they begin Year 1. This means that they still have ground to make up when they enter Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	122577
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10030912

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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matt Batterham
Headteacher	Jo Cuthbert
Telephone number	0115 913 7730
Website	www.larkfields-inf.notts.sch.uk
Email address	office@larkfields-inf.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 September 2007

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The headteacher was not in post at the time of the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons in both phases of the school and in all classes. They carried out other visits to classrooms to look at particular aspects of the school's work and scrutinised examples of the pupils' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders, managers and other staff at the school, and with members of the governing body.
- They spoke with pupils in groups, in lessons, and around the school.
- The inspectors checked the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, but there were not enough from the last 365 days to provide an analysis. They looked at the returns from the most recent year in which there were sufficient for an analysis. They looked at the outcomes of surveys of parents carried out by the school over the past three years. They spoke briefly with some parents at the start of the inspection.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records relating to safeguarding, records relating to the pupils' attendance, the school's information about the pupils' attainment and progress, and other information about the work of the school.

Inspection team

Clive Moss, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Dorothy Stenson	Ofsted Inspector

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