

# Leamore Primary School

Bloxwich Road, Leamore, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 2BB

## Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders have not secured consistently good teaching throughout the school. As a result, outcomes over time have not been good.
- In 2017, at the end of key stage 2, pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils nationally, particularly the most able pupils, boys and disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils of different abilities are not challenged sufficiently. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and, as a result, pupils are not making the progress they are capable of.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to embed their mathematical and writing skills.
- Subject leaders are either too new to their roles or have received insufficient training to develop the skills needed to address weaknesses in teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The behaviour of some pupils causes low-level disruption in classes and slows the learning of other pupils.
- Attendance is below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Too few children in the early years make sufficient progress from their individual starting points.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides informed leadership and is determined to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and governors have correctly identified priorities for improvement and are committed to raising standards across the school.
- The quality of teaching in some classes is improving, leading to better learning for some pupils.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. The school does much to provide help when pupils and families need extra support with their welfare.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with exciting opportunities, through trips and external visitors, to enrich their learning.
- Support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - use assessment information effectively to set work that challenges all groups of pupils, especially the most able pupils
  - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - provide suitable learning opportunities that help disadvantaged pupils, boys and the most able pupils to make good progress across key stage 2
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through extended writing and mathematical problem-solving.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by making sure that:
  - attendance is at least in line with national levels, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - low-level disruption in some classes is eradicated.
- Increase the impact of leaders and governors on school improvement by ensuring that:
  - governors receive comprehensive information about the school's performance so that they are better placed to support and challenge the school on the attainment and progress of key groups of pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils
  - leaders' monitoring of teaching leads to swift action to reduce inconsistencies
  - staff share the most effective practice in school in order to secure consistently good teaching
  - subject leaders improve their leadership work to ensure that identified priorities and actions lead to sustained improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The headteacher leads with clear determination to address the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. She has made effective decisions about all aspects of the school, including staffing. She has introduced new systems for checking pupils' progress and stringently holds teachers to account. However, some teaching remains less effective and some individual teachers are dependent on continued support and guidance.
- Leaders have not yet had time to secure, sustain and embed the necessary changes to ensure consistently good-quality teaching and learning across the school. Their work to improve teaching and learning has been hindered by numerous staff changes since the last inspection. Leaders and governors are working hard to stabilise staffing so that their actions, including the provision of training and support, bring about swifter improvements.
- Leaders now evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses with greater accuracy than they used to. This has enabled them to prioritise the actions they need to take to improve the school further. Consequently, standards are starting to rise in most classes and across a range of subjects. These early improvements are not yet evident in the outcomes at the end of each key stage.
- Subject and phase leaders have not been a focus for development in the past. Some of these leaders are new to their roles. As a result, the impact of their work has been limited. They are now keen to drive improvement and conduct their own accurate checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Pupil premium funding has largely been used to address the complex needs of some pupils. However, it has not had a measurable impact on improving rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have amended their strategy for the use of the pupil premium funding to enable a greater focus on accelerating pupils' progress. Their initiatives have not yet had sufficient time to become embedded and demonstrate an improvement in the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- The headteacher and managers regularly observe lessons, check pupils' work and scrutinise evidence of pupils' progress. Teaching remains variable but the headteacher and, increasingly, managers are starting to tackle identified areas of weak teaching.
- Newly qualified teachers are well supported. They receive both general and bespoke training. They are provided with opportunities to develop their skills through observing best practice and are mentored by a senior member of staff.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides a broad range of subjects and experiences for pupils. There are many school trips, visitors to school and enrichment experiences provided through creative arts. For example, pupils have visited the National History Museum and the National Space Centre and can describe how these visits enhanced their learning. Leaders have invited professional athletes into school to inspire pupils' ambitions. In addition, staff provide challenges designed to enrich pupils' learning, such as the '100 books to read before you leave Year 6' initiative.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported

through assemblies, lessons and the school's daily routines. Pupils readily participate in national initiatives such as anti-bullying week and National Dementia Day.

- Leaders have used the sport premium for primary schools to provide after-school clubs, hire sports facilities and develop family health initiatives. In addition, funding has increased pupils' participation in competitive events such as dodgeball tournaments.
- Leaders and governors appreciate the support that the local authority provides. The local authority keeps the school's work under close review and has brokered the support of a local school federation to support the work of the school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors show a high level of commitment to the school. Some spend extended periods in school and engage in celebration events and school assemblies. However, governors recognise that they are not receiving the detailed information they need in order to challenge senior leaders effectively about the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Throughout the recent period of staffing instability, governors have remained steadfast in their expectations and aspirations for the school. They have worked well with the local authority to ensure that the school receives good-quality external support in order to improve. This is now in place but has yet to make a difference to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors know that teaching over time has been too variable. They were disappointed by outcomes in 2017 and know that results must improve.
- Most governors are trained well and are familiar with up-to-date developments in education. Some have an informed view of the quality of teaching and learning because they come into school to find out for themselves.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are very committed to ensuring that all pupils are happy and secure.
- The culture around keeping pupils safe is strong throughout the school. Leaders and all staff have a range of safeguarding training, including how to keep pupils safe from radicalisation and exploitation. Safeguarding procedures are well organised and secure.
- Checks on the suitability of staff are comprehensive and help to ensure that all who work at the school, or visit regularly, are suitable to work with children.
- Staff teach pupils how to keep safe when using the internet and how to ensure their personal safety.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. As a consequence, the rates of pupils' progress vary across classes and subjects. Over time, pupils fail to reach the standards expected for their age, especially disadvantaged pupils, boys and the most able pupils

across key stage 2. More recently, changes in leadership and staffing have started to improve the quality of teaching, but it remains uneven.

- Teachers do not set work that sufficiently challenges pupils to make good progress. This is particularly noticeable for the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently or effectively use assessment information to check on pupils' prior learning and pitch work at an appropriate level. When work is not challenging, the pace of learning slows and pupils' behaviour can slip.
- Teachers usually follow the school's policy in terms of checking pupils' work in books and offering them feedback. However, the impact of feedback on improving pupils' learning is mixed.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable and requires improvement. Although teaching in mathematics is helping pupils to secure basic skills, too few pupils are given opportunities to apply, use and practise their skills in increasingly complex tasks.
- In some classes, pupils have insufficient opportunities to sustain their writing by producing extended pieces of work and, consequently, are not able to apply their writing skills to full effect. There are few opportunities for pupils to write for a specific audience or purpose and plan, draft and develop ideas accordingly.
- Reading is well promoted throughout the school, with engaging displays, challenges and after-school initiatives used to inspire pupils' interest and enthusiasm. A well-equipped school library is an engaging environment and classes from Nursery to Year 6 enjoy using this resource. All classrooms have inviting and imaginative reading areas so that pupils can learn about authors, read for pleasure or research facts about their current topics.
- The vast majority of teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils' learning. They work confidently and knowledgeably with groups and individuals, providing appropriate levels of challenge and support.
- Support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good across the school, both in classes and in small intervention groups. Staff accurately identify pupils' learning needs and provide specific, well-informed support to ensure pupils' strong progress.
- There are times when teachers use skilful questioning to probe pupils' understanding and reinforce learning. Pupils are keen to answer and make good gains in understanding. Teachers use classroom discussions to deepen knowledge and check learning.
- Teachers plan lessons, events and school trips to inspire and inform pupils in both purposeful and imaginative ways.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are acutely aware of what is right and wrong and understand the need for school rules. Pupils are confident and very proud of their responsibilities, for example as members of the school council.

- Pupils' safety is promoted in a variety of ways, for example through regular assemblies, visiting drama companies and school visitors. The school's extensive work on e-safety helps to keep pupils safe at home, as well as at school.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying do not occur as frequently now as they did in the recent past and that teachers 'do an excellent job and do as much as they can' when dealing with pupils' welfare. Pupils know who to go to when problems occur.
- Pupils experience a wide range of cultural experiences which develop their knowledge of diversity. They have visited a number of local places of worship and can describe how these are important to different world religions.
- Pupils enjoy school and recognise their responsibilities in maintaining positive relationships with others.
- Pupils speak confidently about British values and understand the importance of the rule of law. Pupils have an understanding of the major world faiths and visit local places of worship.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils do not focus as well as they should in lessons. On some occasions, pupils' restlessness distracts others. Consequently, the progress made by some pupils is not as good as it could be. When teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently, this can lead to pupils not concentrating fully or persevering in activities and not showing much enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils respond well to the 'Aspire' principles that underpin the school's expectations of behaviour, and pupils are keen to earn points. The school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently across the school and, as a result, the number of incidents of poor behaviour has fallen sharply since the last inspection.
- Over time, pupils' absence and persistent absence rates have been high and above national figures, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders have treated this with due seriousness. They consider individual circumstances and work closely with families and other agencies to bring about improvements in pupils' attendance. The headteacher and attendance manager challenge parents and carers when needed and they track attendance figures closely, although this has yet to show sustained impact.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- The headteacher acknowledges that current outcomes are not good enough. She has demonstrated tireless determination to improve standards across the school.
- Historical inconsistencies in the quality of teaching meant that pupils did not make sufficient progress by the end of key stage 2. The rates of progress for boys, disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils in particular have been below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards remained below average in

all subjects in 2017, although there were some improvements in reading and mathematics compared with outcomes in 2016.

- Across key stage 2, a lack of challenge and teachers not having high enough expectations, particularly for the most able pupils, mean that pupils make variable progress.
- In 2017, the proportion of key stage 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in reading was in line with national figures and above in mathematics. However, outcomes in writing were well below national figures. School information for these pupils, who are now in Year 3, shows that they are currently making rapid progress with their writing.
- Outcomes in phonics in the Year 1 screening check were broadly in line with national figures in 2016, but declined in 2017. Leaders provided appropriate training for staff and now teachers teach and model letters and sounds with increased accuracy. As a result, pupils' knowledge and application of phonics skills in reading and writing are starting to improve.
- The school's own assessment information shows that pupils are making much better progress across most year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. In the majority of classes, disadvantaged pupils are currently making similar rates of progress to other pupils.
- Leaders are starting to work closely with teachers to ensure that assessments are increasingly accurate. Teachers, together with school leaders, are now vigilant when validating their judgements. This process helps teachers to identify where pupils are underachieving and speedily provide additional support to help those pupils catch up.
- Progress rates for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are improving rapidly and, in many classes, are now similar to all pupils.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Outcomes at the end of the Reception Year have been below national figures for the last two years. Disadvantaged children do not achieve as well as others, and boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Assessments in the early years show that the difference in outcomes between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children is starting to diminish.
- As a result of greater rigour in monitoring, tracking children's progress and staff training, the quality of teaching and learning is now improving, although variations remain.
- The early years leader has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years provision. The leader has been proactive in trying to bring about improvements to planning, teaching, learning and outcomes.
- Support from the local authority has been valuable in identifying specific areas of provision in the early years that need improvement. For example, external support correctly identified the need to improve the learning environment and the recording of

children's achievements. The school has been steadfast in attempting to make these improvements.

- The indoor learning area promotes effective learning through a range of appropriate activities. Resources are well organised, allowing children to explore and learn with increasing independence, both indoors and outdoors.
- An engaging early years curriculum captures children's interests. A recent and more flexible approach to include areas of interest for children has resulted in greater engagement. This has had a positive impact on children's progress.
- Relationships between adults and children, and between children, are warm and secure. Children happily learn alongside one another, taking turns and readily sharing resources. Their behaviour is good.
- Welfare requirements are met and all staff ensure that children are cared for and safe.

## School details

Unique reference number	104157
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10042854

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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs	Alison Buick and Vanessa Holding
Headteacher	Michelle Hill
Telephone number	01922 710 514
Website	<a href="http://www.learmoreblogs.net">www.learmoreblogs.net</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@learmoreprimaryschool.com">office@learmoreprimaryschool.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	12 January 2016

## Information about this school

- Leamore is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Approximately half of the pupils are eligible for support through pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The provision in the early years consists of a Nursery with afternoon sessions and a full-time Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons and conducted learning walks around the school. They spoke to pupils during lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' current workbooks and heard groups of pupils from Years 2 and 6 read.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, including the co-chairs. Meetings were also held with senior leaders, teachers with responsibilities for subject areas, the leader in charge of safeguarding and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documents provided by the school, including information about pupils' attainment and progress, attendance, the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, local authority support, safeguarding and checks on the quality of teaching.
- Parents' views were gathered by speaking to parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors took into account the free-text responses submitted by parents, but there were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, to analyse.

## Inspection team

Nadeem Bhatti, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Linda Brown

Ofsted Inspector

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