

Lavenham Community Primary School

Barn Street, Lavenham, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9RB

Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

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 headteacher sets high expectations and leads the school with determination. He has established a cohesive and effective team who share his vision for success.
- Leaders and teachers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They work together well to share their practice and ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Governors are committed to the school. They ask challenging questions and know the school well. However, plans provided by leaders are not precise about how rapidly they expect their planned actions to have impact.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with exciting experiences and engages them in their learning. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles but have benefited from training to support their effectiveness. However, they are not yet fully involved in checking the impact of their work.
- Current pupils are making strong progress, especially in reading and writing.
- The provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well planned. They make good progress because of the effective support they receive.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils. They support pupils well and instil strong attitudes to learning.
- Children make a good start to their education. Teachers plan activities that engage children's interests and support their good progress.
- In mathematics, teachers do not consistently plan for pupils to use their reasoning skills to think deeply about their learning. This limits the progress they make, especially for the most able pupils.
- Not all teachers insist that pupils present their work neatly when writing across the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders are supported to carry out their roles effectively
 - the school improvement plan shows how leaders and governors will measure the intended impact, particularly on pupils' outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and further raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that pupils develop their mathematical reasoning skills so that they have a secure understanding of the concepts that they are taught
 - challenging the most able pupils to think hard about their learning, especially in mathematics
 - ensuring that all teachers share the high expectations of leaders about how pupils present their work across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has worked tirelessly to bring about rapid improvement in the school. He has inspired a new staff team and developed a collegiate approach to addressing areas of weakness such as pupils' progress. His commitment and drive have contributed to an improvement in practice and secured the school's good overall effectiveness in a short space of time. Both parents and staff are supportive of the changes he has made, creating a positive atmosphere in the school.
- Leaders and teachers are accurate in their self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have used this knowledge effectively to implement a whole-school approach to check the progress of pupils. This means that teaching is now effective because it is addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge and supports the good progress pupils make from their different starting points.
- The curriculum is well constructed and ensures that there is full coverage of all subjects across mixed-aged classes. Each topic provides pupils with memorable experiences to inspire and engage them in their learning. For example, pupils have been on trips to an Anglo-Saxon village and developed a school museum from a study of local history. Leaders make effective use of specialists such as musicians and a sports coach, ensuring that the development of pupils' creative, technical and physical skills are well catered for.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven through the curriculum. Leaders focus on developing pupils' decision-making skills by giving them a voice through the school house system. Recognition of pupils' responsible actions helps to build their sense of citizenship and place in the school community.
- The special education needs coordinator (SENCo) uses her knowledge well to check that individual plans provide effective support for pupils with SEND. The SENCo works with teachers to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made to the curriculum and that they have a positive effect on meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, the support that these pupils receive ensures that they catch up with their peers. Pupils with complex needs make good progress towards achieving the targets in their personalised plans.
- Leaders understand the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils in the school. They make use of a range of strategies to support pupils' well-being and readiness to learn. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils have full access to the opportunities provided in the wider curriculum. Well-targeted actions ensure that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders use the sport premium funding well. Leaders take into account the skills of teachers and have engaged a sports coach to improve the range of activities available for pupils in physical education (PE) lessons. Pupils participate in a wide range of clubs and competitions and have recently enjoyed success by winning the local schools' swimming gala. Leaders' careful monitoring shows the positive impact the funding is having upon pupils' fitness and health.
- Middle leaders make good use of their training and have introduced new strategies to

support the improvements in the quality of teaching. However, they are new to their roles and have not yet fully developed the skills to monitor and evaluate the impact of their work across the school.

- Parents are supportive of the school. They particularly welcome the improved communication and engagement in helping them to understand how well their child achieves while at school.
- The local authority provides good support to help leaders identify key priorities and verify the judgements they make about how well the school is improving.

Governance of the school

- Governors share the vision and high expectations of school leaders. They provide a visible presence in the school community that is appreciated and welcomed by the school staff.
- Together, they have reviewed their practice to provide stronger accountability and worked with the local authority to do so. Governors' committees are in a stronger position to check the work of leaders. Governors use their skills well to challenge leaders and raise key actions. Progress against these key actions is checked at each meeting. They know the school well through the information they receive from the headteacher and the visits they make to the school. However, the school plan for improvement lacks detail about the expected impact of leaders' actions. This means that governors are not always clear how they should measure the progress of improvement, especially for pupils' outcomes.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory duties by checking on the use of the additional funding and checking the safeguarding policies and procedures. The governors have produced a detailed safeguarding action plan which ensures that the processes are followed rigorously and leaders keep pupils safe in school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make use of a planned cycle of training to ensure that staff understand how to keep pupils safe. Staff know the children well and are quick to refer any concerns, no matter how small. They understand how to respond and recognise where children may be at risk of harm. Records are well organised and designated safeguarding leaders work together to check any information they receive so that it is appropriately actioned. The checks for ensuring that adults are suitable to work with children are well maintained.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe. They understand about using the internet safely and how they should respond if asked for personal details. Pupils say that they feel safe in school but would discuss any concerns with their teachers who would help them.
- All parents who spoke with the inspector agreed that their children are well cared for and safe while at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge that ensures that their expectations are set at the right level for the pupils in their class. Teachers use their subject knowledge to help pupils link their learning so that they deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils were able to identify how to use metaphors and similes to produce descriptions of settings.
- Teachers make excellent use of questioning to deepen pupils' thinking and check their understanding. Teachers' probe pupils' responses so that they have to explain their answers. For example, questioning in one lesson prompted pupils to consider other alternatives to the words they had used in their Shakespearean letter from Juliet to her father.
- Teachers address any individual misconceptions as pupils work on their activities. This means that pupils apply themselves and progress with their learning. Where teaching is stronger, teachers ensure that pupils reflect upon all their literacy skills to help edit and improve the quality of their work.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand how to be successful through their explanations and models of learning. Pupils refer to these models on display around the classroom to help them when they are stuck or unsure. This helps to develop their independent learning skills so that they make stronger progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants enjoy positive relationships with pupils. Pupils respond without prompting to adults' direction so that time is used well during the lesson. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils in using their skills to access learning through careful questioning. For example, the guidance provided by the teaching assistant for younger pupils helped them to use their skills to write a set of questions independently.
- The teaching of writing is particularly effective. Teachers make use of high-quality texts to develop pupils' understanding of writing for a purpose. Pupils are challenged to identify how the writers convey moods and feelings to produce their own compositions. For example, pupils used Shakespeare's play 'Romeo and Juliet' to identify the style of language they could apply to their own informal letters.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils are developing a good understanding of number facts through opportunities to apply their skills to solving problems. However, in some teaching there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge through the use of reasoning. This means that their progress is not as strong as it could be.
- Some teachers do not use assessment effectively to plan activities that challenge the most able pupils to think hard about their mathematics. Pupils often rehearse what they already know. In these instances, the progress of the most able pupils weakens.
- Evidence from work in pupils' books shows that some teachers do not share leaders' high expectations of how pupils should present their work. Pupils' handwriting is not as neat when writing in subjects other than English.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Adults know the pupils well. They ensure that pupils are well supported in the school. Regular discussions take place among staff and additional help is provided to support pupils' well-being.
- Pupils take responsibility for looking after one another. They are always looking to spot the good deeds that other pupils perform through the day. Acts of kindness are celebrated in school assemblies, helping to create a harmonious school environment. As one parent commented, 'This is a happy school. My children can't wait to get here and run up the hill every morning to get to school.'
- Pupils' understanding of social responsibility is promoted through pupil voice. House teams regularly discuss local issues and offer suggestions and solutions. For example, concerns about the harmful effects of plastic waste have led to the formation of an eco-council, so that pupils are more aware of their own impact on the environment. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- In most lessons, pupils have good attitudes to learning. Adults set high expectations of pupils' behaviour both in the classroom and around the school. This ensures that there is a calm and orderly environment.
- Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take. They told the inspector that if it did occur then adults deal with any incident swiftly and well. Pupils are well informed about similarities and differences. They are respectful of one another and happy to play and mix with pupils of different ages by sharing their games.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are courteous to visitors by holding doors open or enquiring whether they can help in any way.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They confidently discuss their achievements and the work that has helped them to improve. They apply themselves well to their activities and are prepared to choose challenges that help them think hard about their learning. Pupils listen attentively to adults. They make willing contributions to discussions, often being prepared to disagree with their teacher and offer their own opinions. On occasions, the presentation of pupils' work is not consistent. This is because some teachers do not set high enough expectations or pupils simply do not try to write as neatly as they could.
- Pupils' attendance dipped in 2018 and was no longer at the high levels achieved in earlier years. Leaders have responded quickly by tracking and identifying where pupils' attendance is weaker. Class incentives, work with parents and regular references in newsletters are helping to ensure that attendance is improving rapidly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, the proportion of pupils at key stage 2 attaining the expected and higher standards for reading, writing and mathematics combined were above the national average. However, progress in writing and mathematics was well below the national average in Year 6. This is because pupils did not make good enough progress in these subjects from their starting points.
- Following the results in 2018, leaders have acted swiftly to ensure that there is a stronger focus on pupils' progress through regular meetings with teachers and the use of the school's tracking information. Inspection evidence from work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information shows that current progress is good. Most pupils are now achieving expected standards for their age and making the progress they should.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average. The effective teaching of phonics ensures that pupils make good use of their skills when reading. Leaders ensure that reading books are well matched to support pupils' use of their phonics knowledge to segment and blend unfamiliar words.
- Pupils read widely and for enjoyment. Leaders have selected a range of high-quality texts for each year group. Teachers use the texts as class books, ensuring that pupils access ambitious and challenging language. This also contributes well to pupils' progress in writing. Each classroom has a dedicated area where reading books are on display and encourage pupils to increase the range of different genres they read. Consequently, pupils make strong gains in both reading and writing.
- The support for pupils with SEND is effective. They make good progress because the curriculum is tailored to meet their needs. Where additional support is provided, pupils are encouraged to develop their independent skills to help with their learning. The progress of pupils with SEND is checked carefully and shows that they make strong gains from their starting points.
- While the proportion of disadvantaged pupils across the school is well below average, leaders ensure that additional funding is used effectively. Well-constructed plans identify how each pupil is supported. Leaders provide opportunities to enhance pupils' learning through visits and participation in after-school clubs. This means that disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to their peers and that differences in achievement are diminishing overall.
- Pupils make good progress across the curriculum. This is because leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum is broad and balanced and implemented effectively. Leaders make use of subject specialists to add quality to the provision. For example, all pupils develop their musical skills through the tuition they receive to learn to play a brass instrument.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress with their recall and use of number skills to solve problems. Leaders have introduced 'Fluency Fridays' to improve further pupils' mental recall and understanding of number facts. However, pupils' books show that there are limited opportunities to deepen their mathematical understanding because they are not making consistent use of their reasoning skills. The most able

pupils' progress weakens when they are not challenged to think hard about their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills broadly typical for their age. They make good progress from their starting points so that they are well prepared for the next key stage.
- The early years leader is knowledgeable about how children learn and uses her experience well to support other adults who teach in the provision. This means that assessment systems are used effectively to check the progress and development of the children. The assessment information informs leaders about the plans they make to ensure that children make good progress across all the areas of learning.
- The early years classroom is well organised and resourced. The activities planned by adults link to class themes. This promotes children's curiosity and inspires their learning. For example, children searching for the pirates' treasure were encouraged to count the coins they found and record different number sentences to support their mathematical development.
- Children are sociable and confident. They play and learn well together. Clear routines and high expectations help children to settle quickly. They talk confidently about their learning and share ideas for their work. For example, children were helping one another with different solutions when making their pirate boats and deciding how to fix sails to the mast.
- Phonics is taught well in early years. Adults provide children with many opportunities to use their phonic skills in reading to reinforce their understanding. For example, the instructions written for children's independent activities use the phonic sounds that children are currently learning in their discrete phonic teaching sessions.
- The early years leader and other adults hold regular meetings for parents to discuss the children's progress and how they can support their child at home.
- Adults are skilful at using questioning to help children think more deeply about how they can develop their ideas. During children's chosen activities, adults continually check and record children's progress. Adults talk with children to develop and extend their understanding. For example, while children constructed a pirate ship, the teacher encouraged them to think about a plan and develop their writing skills by labelling parts of the ship.
- The outdoor space is small but includes a range of construction equipment to support children's learning. However, opportunities to promote children's writing skills are not well developed outdoors. This limits their progress in writing, especially for boys.
- Keeping in line with the rest of the school, safeguarding and welfare requirements are in place and meet the statutory requirements for young children.

School details

Unique reference number	124540
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10085475

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	All-through primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Rockall
Headteacher	Rory Michael
Telephone number	01787 247350
Website	www.lavenham.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	admin@lavenham.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 March 2011

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. This means that pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2017.
- Most pupils are of White British ethnic background
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The school offers a breakfast and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was initially scheduled as a one-day inspection following concerns about the school's performance. The inspection converted to a full inspection and the lead inspector completed the second day.
- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. These observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. During the observations the inspector talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed their work.
- The inspector observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime, talked to a group of pupils about their views of school and listened to them read. A sample of books from across the curriculum was also reviewed.
- The inspector had discussions with parents, staff, leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of school documents was considered as part of the inspection. This included: the school's evaluation of its own performance, improvement plans, data on pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations of the quality of teaching and minutes from the governing body meetings, and the school's plan for improvement.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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