

Leavesden Green JMI School & Nursery

High Road, Leavesden, Watford WD25 7QZ

Inspection dates 23–24 February 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is successful in promoting and driving forward a culture of high expectations for all. Leaders and governors work together effectively to develop the school further. Consequently, the school is much improved since its last inspection.
- Pupils across the school make significantly high progress from their various starting points in English and mathematics.
- Most-able pupils achieve significantly well in reading and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in the school. A very large majority of their parents agree. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning have a good effect on their academic progress and personal development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A strong emphasis encourages pupils to work together from the Nursery onwards.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons that inspire and challenge pupils. Learning is well directed and supports pupils' individual learning needs.
- Teachers, together with their learning support assistants, form an effective team, sharing expertise and ideas to the benefit of all pupils.
- Outstanding provision in the Nursery ensures that children make rapid progress. They acquire new skills quickly in all areas. Together with the good progress children are making in the Reception classes, they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Governance has significantly improved and governors now support and challenge leaders to achieve good outcomes. Governors know the school well and have an accurate understanding of both the strengths of the school and the areas that currently require improvement. They are fully involved in the life of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The high expectations observed in English and mathematics lessons are not a feature of all subjects across the curriculum.
- Strategies for engaging parents and understanding what is successful in school life are not yet fully developed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise outcomes for pupils even further by:
 - building on the strong delivery of mathematics and English, so that all subjects are delivered to the same high standards, and accelerating the progress of all pupils across all subjects so they can excel.
- Involve parents in the life of the school so that they can understand fully the impact of the changes that are being made to improve pupils taking responsibility for their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, ably supported by her leadership team, has created a culture of higher expectations for pupils and all staff. She has been uncompromising in her pursuit of the highest standards in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. This high priority on quality teaching and learning has led to good improvement since her appointment. In the words of one member of staff, 'In the last 18 months our school ethos and learning has improved immensely.' A large majority of staff agree.
- All parents spoken to during the inspection agree that this is a 'brilliant school', with one saying, 'I would recommend this school wholeheartedly.' Pupils agree that this is 'a perfect school' and can think of very little to make it even better.
- Good systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating teaching, as well as managing the performance of teachers and learning support assistants. Targets are linked to whole-school improvement and pupil performance, as well as effective teaching and learning. Professional developmental opportunities with effective training and support through teacher-led development projects are effective. This is immediately apparent in the progress made in all areas of children's learning in the Nursery. Each project is linked to tracking pupils' progress over a defined time. Projects have succeeded in developing collaboration across teaching teams and a sense of collective responsibility. Staff members have responded well to this and say that they are 'So proud to be part of this team.'
- The school is confident in the accuracy of its assessment as a result of regular external evaluations of its judgements carried out by local authority advisers.
- Leaders support teachers to be creative in the delivery of the curriculum in English and mathematics and these subjects are taught well, both inside and outside the school. The same high standards are less evident in other aspects of the curriculum. Subject leaders are addressing this.
- The school has a culture of high expectations. Leaders at all levels, including subject leaders, focus sharply on ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential, that they have equal opportunities to prosper and that there is no discrimination.
- Leaders make good use of the funding for disadvantaged pupils to provide support so that they make good or better progress from their starting points. The school is determined to close the gap between their learning and all other pupils. The funding is used very effectively to enable vulnerable pupils to re-engage successfully with their learning.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Parents say that there are a 'great variety in extra curricular activities'. Pupils enthusiastically agree that they have the opportunity to play table tennis, attend the Lego club, join in with the running club and participate in hockey or other local tournaments. Parents have raised money to pay for the recently purchased playtime equipment, which pupils respect and enjoy.
- Pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain is effective because values such as respect and liberty are taught well. Pupils say that 'Liberty is to be treasured.' Pupils demonstrate that they have respect for themselves, other pupils and the adults they meet every day through their actions and what they say.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted, particularly through the school's values. Pupils understand that there are other faiths, which they celebrate annually as a whole school. Aspects such as taking responsibility for actions are foremost in the school's values. Pupils' understanding is shown in their responsibility for being prepared for each lesson and in making their own decisions.
- The school is making good use of the physical education (PE) and sports premium. The PE leader has established a genuine love for PE throughout the school. The school has purchased table-tennis tables, volleyballs and the equipment to play lacrosse in order to broaden pupils' experiences. Pupils of all ages speak enthusiastically about their involvement in running the 'The Daily Mile', which is carried out at any time of the school day. They say, 'our teachers decide when this is the best time; it's usually when we need a break from thinking hard'. The school gained a Quality Mark award for PE in the autumn of 2015.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors are an effective team who work together well. They have been united in being part of what they describe as, 'a massive drive on improving the quality of teaching and increasing pupils' enthusiasm for learning'. Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They visit regularly, and discuss and debate their findings and recommendations in order to evaluate leaders' effectiveness in terms of pupil outcomes across all ages, groups and abilities.
- An external review, carried out at their request, has enabled governors to focus on the right issues for their school. They hold the school to account effectively for its additional spending on both the pupil premium and the physical education and sports premium to ensure best value for money. Governors ensure that performance management is rigorously applied across the school. Governors are fully aware that some parents are concerned about the changing nature of the school culture and have already planned an 'open forum' to reach out to parents in order to allay their concerns.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This is as a result of safeguarding procedures being given a high priority. Leaders and staff work productively with parents to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe. Parents, staff and pupils agree that the school is a safe place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. This is as a result of a determined drive by the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching since her appointment. Teachers and their learning support assistants have high expectations of what pupils should achieve throughout the school.
- Pupils love to learn. Older pupils say that they enjoy a wide range of lessons, which include mathematics, physical education, computing, science, technology, 'anything to do with engines', literacy, 'our themes' and art. They would like to write more often, and for longer, if given the chance.
- Teachers make good use of well-chosen resources. The award of a recent grant has enabled the school to purchase a range of high-quality resources for teaching science more effectively. These include skeletons, planetariums, blackout tents and data loggers. Teachers make good use of these resources to enable pupils to explain their understanding scientifically, through using and applying the correct vocabulary.
- All pupils in the Year 2 class were seen concentrating hard while carrying out activities relating to recognising, finding, naming and writing fractions. A period of reflection at the close of their activities emphasised how pupils mastered their initial 'learning wobbles' about fractions. Pupils understood that a 'wobble is a mistake that is a normal part of learning', while the teacher emphasised that 'challenge is important'. Several pupils are able to share how they have improved their understanding. Photographs of pupils' recent successes include their correctly labelled tenths, fifths and halves, which they have created using rods.
- Teachers provide good support for pupils, including those who have fallen behind, and who need to catch up quickly, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of these pupils. They carefully explain the meanings of unfamiliar words, making good use of practical resources and using new ideas and visual demonstrations to clarify any misconceptions and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of how work should be presented. External evaluations acknowledge the high quality of planning that teachers carry out. Progress over time is clearly evident in pupils' books, which show how pupils are more actively involved in their learning.
- Teachers do not ensure that the high expectations and strategies observed in English and mathematics lessons are features of all subjects across the curriculum. Feedback in subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet at the same high level.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A pupil stated that, 'One of the best things about this school is the fairness of things; teachers listen to us; they believe in us.' Many pupils spoken to agree that they feel listened to and their views are taken seriously.
- A member of staff stated that: 'Children and staff have the opportunity to express their views and are listened to; they work together to find a solution or compromise that is beneficial.'
- Pupils have a clear and appropriate understanding of how to keep safe on the internet. They know what to do and who to tell if they are concerned or have worries.
- Pupils were adamant that any issues such as bullying, if they ever occur, are dealt with swiftly by adults. If, for any reason, this is not effective they say they would, 'report to the headteacher [and] something would be done'.
- Parents say that, 'Teachers are warm, professional and caring, as well as teaching a variety of classes.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils walk around the school politely and considerately at all times during the school day. There is a positive and harmonious atmosphere in the school.
- Pupils' positive attitudes towards learning are demonstrated by the way in which they concentrate and work hard, particularly in their English and mathematics lessons. Pupils in Year 2 say that, 'even when it is hard we never give up because we stand up and face it'.
- Parents say that, 'the breakfast club and the after school club are fabulous'; one parent comments that, 'they even help my daughter with reading'. Pupils socialise happily together, whether they are enjoying a game of chess, concentrating studiously or dressing up and playing a game with a group in the role-play area.
- Pupils' attendance is average. Persistent absence has been reduced. This is because staff and leaders are working sensitively with parents, pupils and the local authority to promote and maintain good attendance.
- Some parents do not understand how the new systems for creating better behaviour throughout the school are working. School leaders and governors are fully aware of this and are continuing to develop strategies for increased parental engagement.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Since her appointment, the main thrust of the headteacher's vision for school improvement has been to raise standards and quickly tackle any instances of underachievement. This has been achieved as a result of a determined drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Pupils are making good progress, particularly in their English and mathematics. From Year 1 onwards, pupils' books show evidence of regularly planned opportunities to write, as well as different ways to record according to pupils' varying abilities. The importance of handwriting and presentation is evident. It is particularly successful for younger pupils in the school. Improvement points are written in ways that pupils understand and include a focus on improving punctuation.
- The teaching and learning of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) are good. This is because phonics is taught consistently well across the early years and Year 1.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported. The leader makes accurate assessments of their needs, and plans effectively for them. They make good or better progress from their varied starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than previously because of good additional specialist help in those areas in which they struggle. This is paying dividends. Sympathetic staff are doing whatever they can to address some pupils' complex needs with greater impact.

- The most-able pupils succeed well. They make good progress because they enjoy the learning challenges they are given. The progress of pupils who need to catch up is checked very regularly and extra help is given if necessary.
- Pupils love reading. They are expected to read widely. Books are celebrated throughout the school in every classroom. Older pupils find it too hard to name one favourite author. They say that they 'read lots and have no favourites'. Pupils readily apply what they have learnt in phonics to unfamiliar words, as well as using picture clues successfully. This was seen, for example, in Year 2, when pupils demonstrated the ability to decode and read challenging texts, such as 'galloping over a desolate wasteland', fluently.
- Pupils are proud of the fact that they no longer 'get homework. We get home learning'. A large majority of parents agree that the home learning provided is appropriate.
- While pupils have clear and effective guidance for improvement in their English and mathematics learning, these high standards are not shown consistently in other subjects.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is good because of effective leadership, which ensures that children make good or better progress in all areas of learning. Teaching is good and teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants in each class is strong. This high-quality support ensures that disadvantaged children, pupils who have special educational needs or disability, the most-able and those who are slow to catch up, all succeed.
- Parents are fulsome in their praise of the early years staff; many say that, 'We have excellent teachers.' Children happily enter the school with their parents at the start of the school day. Parents unanimously agree that they 'feel very welcomed'. A wide range of starting activities are invitingly prepared. Parents know that when they leave their children there, they have settled in well and are ready to learn.
- A recent focus on extending children's learning in the Nursery based on play has had a hugely positive impact. Progress in all aspects is outstanding. Adults work together as a cohesive team, with each member eager to promote children's learning. The effect of this was seen during an active learning session, when one boy asked an adult how to write a 'p' so that he could write 'Happy Birthday' by himself in a card he had made for his friend.
- Parents say that they 'find the phonics sessions on Fridays very useful', as well as the 'stay and play' sessions. They appreciate that they are 'actively encouraged to join in'. Children are very well prepared for the start of Year 1.
- The early years leader ensures that children's needs are identified quickly through accurate assessments. Staff make good use of this information to provide the support children need, working closely with other professionals to move children's learning further forward.
- The children's learning journals provide valuable records of progress in the early years, and are readily available for parents to access at any time. Parents say that they are well informed about their children's progress.
- Children enjoy playing and learning, whether this is inside or outside in a stimulating environment. Their behaviour is good at all times. Leaders promote children's safety and welfare effectively, for example by regularly checking the outside of the premises to ensure that they are safe for all children.

School details

Unique reference number	117324
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10001909

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Creed
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Victoria Lyon
Telephone number	01923 484340
Website	www.leavesden.herts.sch.uk
Email address	head@leavesden.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 October 2013

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- In September 2015, a large number of additional children joined the school, leading to the creation of a second Reception class.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is slightly below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who receive support from pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is extra funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has received one monitoring visit by Ofsted to determine how much progress it was making in meeting its areas for improvement.
- Since the last inspection, there have been several changes of staff, including the senior posts of headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons across all age groups in the school; some lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors also made other visits to classes and looked at pupils' work in books, as well as samples of pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics. They listened to several pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, a representative of the local authority, pupils and governors. Inspectors talked informally to pupils at lunch and breaktimes, and observed them in assembly and around the school.
- Inspectors examined the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress for different year groups and in different subjects. This included information about progress in the early years.
- A number of documents were evaluated, including safeguarding policies and procedures, the school improvement plan and the school's evaluation of its own work. Checks on teachers' effectiveness and records relating to behaviour and attendance figures were also made.
- Inspectors met informally with many parents at the beginning of each school day. Inspectors also took account of the 79 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). The responses to 22 staff questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Gay Whent, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lake	Ofsted Inspector
Joseph Figg	Ofsted Inspector

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