

Lessness Heath Primary School

Erith Road, Belvedere, Kent DA17 6HB

Inspection dates

5–6 December 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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders, trust leaders and governors, are committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and has high ambitions for the school. She is well supported by a dedicated leadership team and staff. Together, they have successfully created a caring and inclusive school.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects, including reading, mathematics and, particularly, writing.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding.
- Governors have a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving. They challenge leaders to show the impact of their work to improve teaching; they also support them in ensuring that high targets are set and reached.
- Pupils enjoy and benefit from a broad curriculum, including a variety of out-of-school activities. This makes a strong contribution to their understanding of the wider world.
- Pupils behave with consideration and care. They look out for each other and are fully involved in school life.
- The school develops and nurtures its pupils well. As a result, they feel safe and secure and have few concerns about bullying.
- Rewards and supportive action for pupils and their families have led to rising attendance.
- Children in the early years make excellent progress in their learning and social development. This is because of consistently good care and a well-organised, stimulating and secure environment.
- Parents comment very favourably on the school and most say they would recommend it to others.
- At times, pupils are uncertain of their targets in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation sometimes lack care. They do not have sufficient opportunity to extend their writing skills in other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - making pupils more aware of their targets in writing, reading and mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils pay attention to their handwriting and presentation.
- Ensure that skills learned in writing are applied across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's drive and strategic vision have been instrumental in bringing about rapid school improvement. The headteacher, with the support of the trust and the governing body, has created a strong and resourceful leadership team. Leaders are determined to make this new school as good as it can be. All leaders have established their expectation that high aspirations, as well as good teaching and behaviour, are the rule.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and aspects that need more work. This evaluation informs a detailed and ambitious improvement plan.
- Leaders regularly and robustly check on the quality of teaching throughout the school. They set staff challenging targets and make sure they receive the support they need in order to reach them. Teachers said how much they appreciate the advice and professional development opportunities they have received, and how these have enabled them to be better teachers. Where teaching is weaker, senior leaders have put in place effective support packages that include observation of good practice within school and in other schools, as well as working alongside other practitioners.
- All teachers have been given challenging targets that are linked to the standards expected of teachers nationally, pupils' progress and the school development plan. These targets are reviewed regularly. This has helped to continually improve the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum motivates pupils, who told inspectors that learning is enjoyable and interesting. The emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics ensures that, by the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the key skills that they need to succeed when they move to their secondary schools. The school's curriculum is designed to be motivating to pupils and gives due weight to subjects such as history, geography, the arts, technology and physical education.
- The school works hard to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are particularly good at listening to, and valuing, the views of others.
- The sports premium funding is being used to help staff improve their skills and confidence in teaching physical education. It is also used effectively to increase pupils' participation and enjoyment in these lessons.
- The coordination of support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Detailed records of the needs of each pupil are maintained and the impact of the arrangements made to support them is closely monitored.
- The school has very good links with parents, the vast majority of whom have a high regard for the school and its work and are very pleased with their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to attend parents' workshops, which enable them to support their children at home with their learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very effective. They understand the school's data about pupils' progress and offer the school a considerable level of challenge.
- Governors have contributed very well to the school's self-evaluation and have an extremely clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- They are active in their oversight of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress. They have set the headteacher clear targets with respect to these.
- Governors ensure the efficient management of financial resources, including the use of pupil premium funding. Their impact on the school's drive for improvement is substantial.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They know that the school cares about them and what to do if they feel upset. They know there are key members of staff to whom they can go if they need help.
- Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Very comprehensive records are kept to keep children safe. All adults in the school are checked for suitability and have received extensive training. There are good links to external agencies. Any referrals are quickly followed up.
- Parents are provided with training to help their children, including on e-safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching throughout the school encourages pupils' interest in their learning and supports their good progress. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Teachers plan well for pupils of different ages and abilities in the classes. They make good use of questioning and follow up pupils' answers well. For example, teachers often get pupils to explain their calculation methods in mathematics. This also helps the teacher to assess pupils' understanding.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are quickly identified and support is provided that helps them make good progress from their starting points. In particular, teachers adopt a wide range of techniques to support these pupils, founded on clear planning and the development of mutual trust and respect.
- Teaching assistants ensure that there is effective support of the different groups of pupils in class. They also provide very effective support to individual pupils, including those with profound learning needs. This ensures that all pupils are included very well in all lessons and make at least good progress.

- The teaching of phonics is effective. Some pupils find this aspect of their learning hard, and additional support is provided for them. As a result, they achieve well by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils expressed extremely high opinions of their teachers and explained how the levels of challenge they experience helps them to learn and make progress. Pupils' good attitudes to their work and interest in learning also support the good progress that they make.
- A very large majority of parents who were interviewed by inspectors thought that their children were taught well and made good progress as a result.
- Even though most pupils achieve well, there are times when pupils are uncertain of their learning targets in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There remains some inconsistency in teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work, with some tolerance of poor handwriting.
- The writing tasks provided by teachers in subjects across the curriculum do not build on the good levels of challenge seen in literacy sessions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Relationships in the school are excellent. Staff and pupils act with respect for each other at all times. The school's ethos of equal opportunities and valuing diversity contributes to an environment in which pupils treat people from all backgrounds with equal respect.
- Members of staff are very caring and know the pupils' specific needs well. They provide strong support to promote pupils' physical and emotional well-being. For example, there is valuable support for pupils and their parents who are emotionally unsettled. The school has devised a programme, 'Family Matters', which helps parents to support their child at times when they may be experiencing emotional distress. This programme has been adopted as an example of good practice in other local schools. Parents' feedback to the school has been exceptionally complimentary about this programme and its impact.
- Pupils enjoy school. Because of this and the rigorous actions taken by leaders to work with parents, attendance has improved over the year and persistent absenteeism has fallen. A member of the leadership team stands on 'gate duty' daily to register latecomers. As a result, punctuality is excellent.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Their behaviour is good in lessons and they do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils show a strong sense of community. They work well together and support each other when learning and at play. They are keen to do the tasks asked of them by

teachers, and say that they enjoy coming to school. Such attitudes have a positive impact on their learning.

- Pupils say that they can easily talk to any adult. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils are a strength of the school. As a consequence, any unhappiness is quickly identified and resolved. For example, pupils say that there is little bullying, and that any that does occur is quickly and effectively dealt with.
- A small number of parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire are concerned about a few cases of bullying. Inspectors found that any incidents are thoroughly investigated and that bullying is not tolerated.
- Pupils work hard most of the time, although they do not always take enough pride in the presentation of their work, particularly in topics and subjects across the curriculum. There are also occasions when their work has not been set at the right level, when they become quietly inattentive.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement is improving strongly in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. The school's assessment information shows current pupils make good progress. The quality of work in pupils' workbooks this year also shows pupils learn well.
- Whereas, in 2017, Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics was below national averages, standards are rising rapidly in all year groups. Pupils make good progress in reading because they are heard to read regularly and parents also provide good support. Work in mathematics is well matched to pupils' abilities. Good attention is paid to stretching able pupils. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson for the most able pupils, a pupil commented, 'I thought this was hard, but keeping at it and with the help of my teacher, I got it!'
- Pupils' writing is good. In 2017, Year 6 pupils attained very well in writing, showing strong progress. The progress boys and girls make is broadly similar. The quality of work seen in pupils' books did not show any significant variation between boys and girls.
- The support the school provides for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. The progress they make is typically good.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in response to the close attention that teachers pay to the welfare and learning needs of individuals.
- Pupils do not transfer their good writing skills to work in other subjects such as science and history.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Outcomes for children by the end of the early years have significantly improved. Children enter with a wide range of starting points, but mostly below those expected for their age. Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning so that the

proportion attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is well above the national average. Children are very well prepared to move on to Year 1.

- Activities, both indoors and outdoors, are interesting, challenging and accessible to all. The outdoor area is used very well to offer a wide range of learning activities that develop children's reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children cooperate well together.
- A strong emphasis on developing children's use of speech helps them communicate very effectively with their friends and adults. This is especially beneficial to children who speak English as an additional language. These children make rapid progress as a result of teachers' and teaching assistants' skilled modelling of accurate spoken English.
- Children work well together on learning tasks or in small groups with an adult. They are keen to talk about their work and are very proud of what they achieve. The children are happy to share resources and take turns readily. They are polite and behave well. Adults model good manners for the children to copy. The children's social skills are nurtured and they understand how to play safely.
- Teachers and teaching assistants in early years promote children's understanding of phonics exceptionally well. Staff help the most able children to extend and develop their skills quickly. The support offered to those children who need a little extra help, or are less confident with their letters and sounds, is very good. This enables them to develop their basic reading skills quickly.

School details

Unique reference number	141866
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10041047

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

Type of school	Primary School
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	639
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Carolyn Sekulowicz-Barclay
Headteacher	Mrs Kate O'Connor
Telephone number	01322 433290
Website	www.lessnessheath-bexley.co.uk
Email address	admin@lessnessheath.bexley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Lessness Heath Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has three classes in each year group. The early years consists of a morning and afternoon nursery provision and two full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average and increasing.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also below the national average.

- There is a breakfast club before school and extended care after school for five days a week on the school site, offered by an external provider.
- Following the inspection of the predecessor school in February 2015, the school converted to become an academy and is part of the Primary First Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classrooms as well as observing intervention groups.
- School leaders took part in joint observations with inspectors and attended all inspection team meetings.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. Inspectors also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body and two representatives from the Primary First Trust.
- The inspectors worked in partnership with the school's senior leaders when analysing information about the school. The inspectors looked at pupils' outcomes, the school's evaluation of its own performance, minutes from governors' meetings, the development plan and monitoring and evaluation records. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- The inspectors walked around the school with the pupils to find out more about their work from displays and extra-curricular activities. Inspectors also interviewed a group of children from across the school to determine their views on behaviour and safety.
- The inspectors spent time on the playground at playtime, observed behaviour in the lunch halls, listened to pupils read and looked at work in pupils' books alongside senior leaders.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents by analysing the 72 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as speaking informally to parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

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