

Luton Junior School

Luton Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 5AW

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has transformed key elements of the school by introducing new drive and vision.
- Newly appointed senior leaders and governors have been effective in carrying through this vision so that many aspects of the school's work have improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from starting points that are significantly below the national average for seven-year-olds.
- Standards are rising fast. The school's assessment information indicates that the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is now in line with that of all pupils nationally.
- All pupils are making at least expected progress, with many making more than this.
- Teachers have responded with commitment and enthusiasm to the many new professional development opportunities leaders have provided for them. This has improved the overall quality of teaching so that it is good, with some outstanding elements.
- The curriculum introduced by the new headteacher is a very strong feature of the school. Pupils are excited and engaged by the interlinked activities and consequently make good gains across many areas of learning.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and behave well at playtimes because the school has high expectations which they want to meet.
- Pupils love coming to school. Consequently attendance has risen and is now average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure pupils make and sustain the most rapid possible progress in all subjects.
- Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to explain what they know but does not always deepen pupils' understanding.
- The planning and assessment of speaking and listening are not as rigorous as those of reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers. All the teaching staff were observed, including those who teach specialist groups. This included observing the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and guided reading.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and held meetings with pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in lessons, as well as the work pupils have completed over time in their books.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including those related to safeguarding and child protection, minutes of meetings of the governing body, notes of visits from local authority representatives, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, data relating to pupils' academic performance, logs relating to behaviour and the attendance figures.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the national average. The proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is considerably higher than the national figure.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after pupils, those entitled to free school meals and the children of service families, is much higher than the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A number of ethnic minority groups are represented in varying proportions, including many pupils from Eastern European backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is nearly double the national average, and many of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English.
- An exceptionally high number of pupils join and leave the school at other than the usual entry times.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There has been a significant restructure of staffing since the previous inspection, with some staff leaving and some being promoted. The headteacher is new, as is one of the assistant headteachers, and there are a number of new middle leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make and sustain the most rapid possible progress in all subjects by:
 - ensuring teachers' questions deepen pupils' understanding by, for example, encouraging pupils to justify their answers and demonstrating high-level responses
 - ensuring teachers apply the same rigour to the planning and assessment of speaking and listening skills as they do for reading and writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start school with skills that are often very low. They now make good, and often exceptional, progress. The gap between their attainment and that of pupils nationally is narrowing rapidly because their attainment is rising at a higher rate.
- Progress is monitored rigorously and at regular intervals so that any pupils whose performance dips are quickly identified. Specific measures are then put in place, matched to individual needs, in order to get pupils back on track swiftly.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because these skills are consolidated across a range of subjects. All groups make good progress in lessons because teachers plan activities that meet their needs well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are met in a highly individualised way by skilled, specially trained staff.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress because the same individualised approach is taken to meeting their needs. The school has employed bilingual staff, and this has ensured pupils from Eastern European backgrounds settle quickly and begin to make progress immediately. Those at the early stages of learning English meet carefully crafted targets designed to improve their language skills step by step, thereby ensuring they acquire English quickly. Extra phonics lessons help pupils recently arrived in this country make rapid progress in their reading.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve well because the school uses the funding provided for maximum impact. For example, a specialist reading programme produces an average of 13 months' progress across a 10 week programme, and a similar mathematics programme's results show an average of 19 months' progress. In this way, the school is narrowing the attainment gap for this group compared to those who are not eligible. Leaders monitor this by comparing both groups against similar groups nationally, based on pupils' average point scores in national tests.
- Different groups achieve similarly well because the school is a highly inclusive community that is committed to ensuring all pupils have an equal chance of gaining success.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan tasks that meet the varying needs of the pupils in their classes. In lessons observed, for example, staff presented the same problem in mathematics but with simpler and harder numbers, supported a group using symbols, pictures and actions, and provided prompts at different levels of complexity for written tasks. These approaches are effective and ensure that all groups and individuals make good progress.
- Teaching assistants support learning exceptionally well. Their high levels of skill and commitment ensure they promote the learning of key skills effectively and contribute significantly to the good progress pupils make.
- Phonic skills and spelling patterns are taught effectively. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of what skills they need when they are reading and feel confident that they can tackle unknown words.
- Reading is well taught. Regular guided reading sessions ensure pupils have the opportunity to answer focused questions, specifically designed to promote particular reading skills.
- Spelling is reinforced by entertaining and relevant games and short, snappy lessons that have a clear focus on particular patterns.
- Pupils know the personalised targets they have been set. They understand how those targets, alongside marking in books, help them to move to the next step in their learning. They enjoy being actively involved in the process by marking others' and their own work and having in-

depth discussions with their teachers about what helps them to learn.

- Lessons are always interactive. Teachers ask relevant questions that allow pupils to contribute what they have previously learnt. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding by, for example, asking them to justify or explain their answers more fully.
- Although there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to speak, and they listen in order to follow instructions and complete tasks, their oral contributions and listening skills are not assessed in the same way as their written ones. Teachers consequently do not help pupils develop their spoken language as effectively as their written language.
- Teachers present the new curriculum in a highly imaginative way so that all pupils are engaged in learning they see as fun. Planning makes meaningful links between subjects and this supports pupils' learning well. For example, pupils were highly motivated to apply their newly found understanding of decimals in mathematics when they had to work out how many items they could take in their backpacks as part of their 'survivors' theme.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around the school and playtimes are happy affairs, if a little boisterous. Lunchtime, in the new café-style dining area, gives pupils the opportunity to make choices about how much and what they eat from the extensive salad and vegetable buffet. Pupils have become very conscious of the nutritional content of many of the foods on offer and an overwhelming majority choose healthy options.
- Many pupils say school is a place where they feel very safe and the parents and carers who responded to the online survey agree unanimously that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are given opportunities to make independent choices in their learning and they make the right ones. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils did not need the teacher to tell them to produce long, complicated operations. They knew the level at which they should be working and chose to challenge themselves appropriately.
- Pupils have responded very well to the behaviour system introduced by the new headteacher. They understand the kind of behaviour which will win them a coveted purple card and are proud of how many they have amassed. Conversely, anyone receiving a red card, which means they have displayed inappropriate behaviour, is disappointed at having let themselves and everyone else down. This system, along with a more motivating curriculum and teaching that meets pupils' needs, all grounded in a caring and inclusive ethos, means that incidents of poor behaviour are few and far between.
- Pupils say that there is little if any bullying and that incidents of any sort are dealt with swiftly and fairly. They understand the kinds of comments and behaviour that are unacceptable and are aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet.
- Attendance has risen over the last few years because the level of pastoral care has increased and the school works more closely with families in order that they understand the importance of regular attendance.
- The recruitment of an intervention worker has made a big difference to pupils who have particular behavioural needs. He supports pupils in making the right decisions and developing strategies to understand and manage potential instances of inappropriate behaviour.
- Due to a whole school focus on behaviour, the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen to zero.

The leadership and management are good

- The drive and vision of the new leadership team have injected a vigour and sense of purpose into staff and pupils alike.

- Performance management has been used astutely to improve the quality of teaching. Innovative approaches to improving teachers' skills and understanding have seen rapid gains in terms of pupils' progress. Staff are highly motivated to do well for their pupils and say how lucky they are to enjoy their jobs so much.
- The school knows its strengths and areas of development well and its sharp and efficient action planning reflects this.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. There are moments of awe and wonder throughout the school week. For example, going through a life-sized wardrobe and emerging in the fictional land of Narnia or watching asteroids hurtling through space elicit gasps of amazement. Leaders are effective in ensuring there is no discrimination and that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in all activities.
- The rich curriculum, trips out and visitors into school all combine to ensure pupils' horizons are broadened and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The local authority helped in the appointment of the new headteacher and is now providing light-touch support as befits a good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to keeping their skills fresh and relevant and attend training as necessary. Newly recruited members have a range of useful skills, which has increased governors' ability to challenge the school to ensure pupils' needs are well met. Governors ask sharply focused questions about the use of the pupil premium funding in order to ascertain how well it is spent. They scrutinise data to make decisions. For example, they have agreed to continue to fund a reading intervention because it leads to 13 months' progress in 10 weeks. They take an active role in making astute appointments of staff and are committed to a salary structure that rewards good performance. Governors monitor the quality of teaching closely and work with the headteacher on providing opportunities for professional development. They are clear that pay increments are dependent on successful completion of performance management targets and use this to promote better teaching. Safeguarding procedures are thorough.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118318
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	405762

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rikki McMachan
Headteacher	Davinder Jandu
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 November 2010
Telephone number	01634 844149
Fax number	01634 843582
Email address	jandd004@medway.org.uk

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