

Maidenhall Primary School

Newark Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 8LD

Inspection dates

26–27 April 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Considerable turbulence in leadership has limited the impact of leaders' actions to secure good teaching and pupils' good outcomes.
- Although current pupils' outcomes are improving, they are not yet good. Standards are too low in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Many middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. Their skills in using assessment information and monitoring the effectiveness of teaching are at an early stage of development.
- Systems intended to support the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not yet fully in place.
- Teachers are not using the new teaching strategies introduced to improve pupils' achievement consistently and effectively.
- The quality of teaching across the school is not consistently good. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can, and should, achieve.
- Teachers do not routinely provide most-able pupils with activities that challenge and stretch their learning. This slows their progress.
- The teaching of reading requires improvement. Teachers are not ensuring that all pupils in phonics lessons are learning appropriately. Pupils' reading comprehension across the school is not developed as well as it should be.
- Too few children in the early years achieve a good level of development. Children do not make swift and secure progress, because teaching is not consistently well enough matched to their learning needs. In addition, children spend too much time on activities which lack purpose.

The school has the following strengths

- Current leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their plans for improvement are appropriately thought through and well underway.
- This school is improving. Leaders' actions are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, particularly in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They work and play together harmoniously, listen well to instructions and are polite and courteous.
- Pupils enjoy the variety of learning experiences that the school provides for them.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they can improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that the new systems that support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are used effectively to monitor pupils' learning and progress and evaluate the impact on pupils' outcomes
 - evaluating the school's new teaching approaches to ensure that these are having a long-lasting impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics to meet at least the national average in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and that the inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching are eradicated
 - teachers consistently set work that stretches and challenges the most able pupils
 - the teaching of phonics enables pupils to acquire phonics skills more rapidly and successfully apply these skills to their reading and writing
 - teachers improve pupils' reading comprehension skills so that pupils have a deep understanding of the texts that they are reading.
- Improve early years provision by:
 - developing leadership to improve the quality of teaching so that more children reach a good level of development and are ready for Year 1
 - using assessment information accurately to plan teaching that meets the needs of all children
 - providing more challenging and purposeful opportunities for children to practise and develop their early reading, writing and number skills when choosing their own activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not been successful in rapidly improving teaching and learning and raising standards in all phases consistently across the school. The turbulence caused by several changes in senior leadership since the previous inspection has left a legacy of weak teaching and, subsequently, weak outcomes. The current leadership team is positive, re-energised and forging ahead with actions to rapidly improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Most of the middle leaders are new to their roles and some are also new to the school. They have quickly understood the actions that have been needed to improve the quality of teaching. Their actions are beginning to bring about necessary improvements to the quality of teaching. However, this work has yet to be fully embedded within the school and evaluated comprehensively.
- Leaders are aware that the assessment of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has not always been accurate. New systems of assessment and monitoring have been developed very recently. Funding to support these pupils is beginning to be used well, and more recently their progress has been improving. Staff have only just begun to develop a clearer understanding of how to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The headteacher has set high expectations and has a clear focus on doing what is right for pupils and their families. Her strong leadership is steering improvements across many areas of school life, including the quality of teaching. The headteacher is ably supported by enthusiastic and skilled senior leaders, who share her passion and determination to move the school forward. Despite clear signs of positive change, these are in their infancy and so pupils' outcomes, teaching and early years currently still require improvement.
- Senior leaders and governors have an honest and realistic view of the challenges that the school is facing. Leaders' development plans correctly identify those areas in need of rapid improvement.
- Staff, including newly qualified teachers, speak highly of the support they receive. The provision for their professional development is strong. Leaders are providing a comprehensive range of training to support teachers and teaching assistants to develop their skills so that improvement is rapid. Staff have embraced this training positively. They told inspectors that they feel valued, and morale among staff is high.
- There is now a strong focus on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the progress required to attain as well as all, and other, pupils nationally. Governors challenge the effectiveness of the pupil premium spending. Within school, there is no discernible difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others. Standards for all pupils are not high enough. Leaders are now ensuring that pupil premium is deployed to eradicate any gaps in knowledge and skills for those pupils who are eligible.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is spent well. Specialist teachers have been brought in to deliver high-quality teaching in PE and to train staff

to teach the subject effectively. Additionally, pupils have benefited from access to a wide variety of after-school sports clubs, competitive events and activities. As a result, more pupils are participating in a wider range of sports. Leaders encourage pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. For example, during the inspection pupils were encouraged to cycle to school as part of a 'big pedal' day.

- The school provides a broad and relevant curriculum that is regularly enlivened by special events and visits which extend pupils' experiences and enable them to make meaningful links in their learning. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the variety of learning experiences that the school provides for them. One pupil expressed the views of many by commenting: 'There's lots more happening now – it's great! We learn new things that we don't get to do at home.'
- School life, timetabled subjects and a range of extra-curricular activities contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The values that underpin the school's work are displayed throughout the school and are referred to regularly. For example, pupils told inspectors that the values of resilience and determination are important: 'So you never give up. Think you can do it, not you can't.' Fundamental British values, such as tolerance and respect for the rule of law, are also strongly promoted. Pupils stated: 'Our teachers teach us to celebrate differences and be grateful for all the things we have.'
- Most parents spoken with during the inspection, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, value and support the school. Parents recognise the recent improvements in the school's provision. They appreciate the good communication that they receive, the many learning experiences provided for their children and how senior staff are approachable and address any concerns efficiently. One parent spoke for many by saying: 'I am really pleased with the school. Especially the extra activities that are promoted for the children. The teachers are so friendly and always open for any discussion and attend to our concerns quickly. My children love to go to school.'
- The local authority has provided a balanced measure of effective support and challenge aimed at raising standards and improving pupils' outcomes during the many changes in leadership and governance.

Governance of the school

- The chair of the governing body has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve. She is working closely with other governors, some of whom are new, so that the governing body develops quickly and consistently provides the high level of challenge needed to ensure that the school rapidly improves.
- The governing body has recently undertaken an audit to ensure that they have the necessary breadth of skills and expertise to carry out their statutory responsibilities. As a result, governance is becoming more strategic and sharply focused on the key priorities of the school. Their regular visits, checks and meetings with leaders are now strongly linked with gauging how well school leaders are securing improvement against the school's improvement plans.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding is at the centre of the school's work. Systems and processes for pre-employment checks and appointing staff are fit for purpose. Training and induction for staff are similarly effective. As a consequence, staff know what to do to keep pupils safe and how to use agreed processes to report, record or escalate any concerns.
- Leaders, including the school's family workers, work effectively with a range of external agencies and professional services to keep pupils safe. Leaders are tenacious and respond in a timely manner to act on behalf of pupils and keep them safe, for example in working with social services and family support groups.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They enjoy coming to school and have confidence in the staff to look after them.
- Parents who responded to Parent View, and those who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, agreed that their children are safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment overall. Not enough teaching is well suited to pupils' needs. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information more effectively, but pupils are still being given tasks that do not take into account their starting points. As a result, rates of progress vary across and within year groups, so that pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have introduced a range of approaches to support the rapid improvement of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. Where teachers have adopted these, there has been a notable impact on how well learning proceeds. However, the use of these approaches is still inconsistent and so the effect on pupils' outcomes across the school remains limited.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ensure that the most able pupils are regularly given tasks that challenge them and stretch their thinking. Where this is the case, pupils' progress is strongest. However, not all teachers share the same high expectations. Too many are willing to accept lesser amounts of work or to overly praise work that does not represent a pupil's best efforts. They are too slow to challenge most-able pupils or do not challenge them at all. Consequently, pupils' progress slows.
- Phonics teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not consistently move pupils' learning forward when pupils clearly know the letter sounds. Teachers do not check carefully that all pupils are following their instructions to ensure that pupils are learning at an appropriate pace. Resources used are not consistently well matched to pupils' phonics ability, which limits their effectiveness.
- The teaching of reading is a priority for the school and leaders have provided teachers with support to plan, organise and resource their teaching more effectively. These improvements have been more successfully introduced in some classes than in others.

Where reading is taught most effectively, teachers and teaching assistants skilfully introduce and model new vocabulary and question pupils, encouraging them to retrieve information and gain meaning from text. In other classes, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their inference skills (using clues from the text to come to a conclusion) and become strong readers. Some pupils have reading books which are too hard and reduce their enjoyment of reading.

- The teaching of writing is inconsistent across classes and key stages. Where teaching is strongest, pupils' writing skills are being developed effectively both in English lessons and across the wider curriculum. Pupils are given opportunities to write in different styles and for different purposes, such as writing poems or historical recounts.
- The teaching of mathematics is beginning to improve because of the effective training provided for staff. Teachers ensure that pupils have understood basic concepts and encourage them to develop their skills through daily practice. Work in pupils' books confirms that teachers plan activities that cover number and arithmetic, as well as mathematical topics, such as time, money, shape, space and measure. However, development of pupils' skills in problem-solving and reasoning is less consistent, and this has a negative impact on rates of progress, especially for the most able pupils.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge across other areas of the curriculum, engaging pupils well in learning across a varied range of topics. They help pupils to develop subject-specific skills, such as using maps and making comparisons between different times and/or places in history and geography.
- It is clear, through looking at work in pupils' books, that progress for some pupils is improving. This is because expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher, and stronger links between subjects support pupils' understanding. Teachers often choose to base their teaching across subjects on a high-quality book. This has given pupils a focus and something concrete to write about.
- Leaders' actions are ensuring that teaching is improving, particularly in Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers in these classes are skilled in identifying where gaps in learning exist and provide effective support to enable pupils to catch up quickly.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well cared for in the school. The school has a strong ethos of nurture and support. New leaders are beginning to ensure that these pupils are given appropriate challenge and guidance in their learning. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are beginning to make stronger progress.
- Classrooms and corridors are brightly decorated with interesting displays of pupils' work and helpful guidance for learning. These resources and examples of good work encourage pupils and show them what they can achieve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff and pupils get on well together and relationships are warm and respectful. Pupils told inspectors that the adults in the school are 'very friendly to everybody'.

- The school has ensured that pupils are given important messages about staying safe in different situations. For instance, e-safety sessions teach pupils how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including racism and cyber bullying. They say, though, that bullying is rare in their school and that any incidents that do occur are very swiftly dealt with.
- Older pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility in school, for example by being a prefect, junior road safety officer or a play leader.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and friendly, and cheerfully welcome visitors to the school. They are proud of their school and take care to make sure that they look smart in their school uniform. Pupils talk enthusiastically about different aspects of school life that they particularly enjoy, including special events such as camping in the school grounds and the wide range of after-school clubs, which pupils say 'helps us to grow in confidence'.
- In their conduct around the school and at playtimes, pupils are considerate and respectful. They regularly open doors for adults and walk quietly when others are working. This is because staff are vigilant and have high expectations of conduct and there is a strong emphasis on values and good manners.
- Pupils across the school demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are happy to answer questions and give their ideas and opinions. Pupils also listen well to both their teachers and their classmates and settle quickly to work. They behave well, even at those times when their work is not sufficiently challenging or engaging, and so lessons are seldom disrupted by off-task behaviour.
- Leaders have worked hard to promote the importance of good attendance, and to encourage families not to take holidays during term time. Staff closely monitor why pupils are absent and follow up concerns with parents quickly. Leaders work closely with other external agencies, such as the education welfare officer, to ensure that any attendance concerns are addressed. As a result, attendance rates are improving and are now close to the national average. The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school is reducing and moving nearer to national figures.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders' actions to improve standards in key stage 1 and key stage 2 have lacked urgency. The progress pupils make is not consistently good in all subjects and all year groups. Too many pupils are not prepared as well as they should be for the next stage of their education.
- Over time, the standards reached by pupils at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 have been below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in 2017, the progress pupils made from their various starting points, and the standards

they reached at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, improved in all three subjects, although still remained below national figures.

- The teaching of phonics is not yet effective. Since the previous inspection, results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have been below the national average. Leaders have provided training for teachers to increase their knowledge and skills. However, there still remains some inconsistency in the quality of phonics teaching within classes and across year groups.
- The progress and attainment of the most able pupils vary across the school. A number of most-able pupils themselves confirmed to inspectors that they felt that they were capable of achieving more. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the priority to consistently challenge this group of pupils. Consequently, the attainment of the most able is beginning to rise in some year groups. However, leaders know that there is much more to do to ensure that the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels by the time they leave Year 6 is at least in line with the national average.
- Pupils' current workbooks and the school's current assessment information demonstrate pupils' achievement is improving in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The pupil premium funding is now used more effectively to ensure that there is little in-school variation between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils catch up with pupils nationally. This is a key focus in their improvement plans.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is beginning to improve. Work in books and observations in lessons indicate that most of these pupils are making stronger progress. This is because the new leadership team has evaluated these pupils' needs and starting points and put in place more focused support.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has been below average since the previous inspection. Although children's starting points are low, this still does not represent sufficiently positive progress for many children.
- The physical learning environment in the early years has improved since the previous inspection. Children now have the opportunity to learn in well-resourced and attractive indoor and outside areas. However, the effectiveness of teaching in the early years is mixed. Children typically make more progress when working directly with a teacher or teaching assistant than when tackling independent activities. This is because staff do not make the most of the learning environment by providing a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities so that children learn as they play. As a result, children are not developing their early reading, writing and mathematics skills well enough and they do not get the maximum benefit from the provision available.
- Staff do not currently use assessment information as sharply as they could do to inform planning. As a result, teaching is not consistently fully matched to children's learning needs, which slows the rate at which learning progresses. Leaders do not have a clear enough overview of children's progress across all of the Reception classes.

- The leadership of early years is currently being developed. Following a recent review from external specialists, leaders now have an accurate view of what needs to improve and what is working well across the early years. Plans for improvement are coherent and tightly focused.
- Staff are keen to improve their practice and are responding positively to the guidance they are being given. Adults are beginning to interact more effectively with children to move their learning on by asking relevant questions and providing timely prompts. These developments are at an early stage, but are showing signs of accelerating children's progress.
- Relationships between adults and children in the early years are positive. Although children occasionally play boisterously outside, behaviour is typically good. Staff ensure that children are well cared for and learn and play happily together.
- Safeguarding is equally effective in early years as it is in the rest of the school.
- Parents of children in the early years are well informed and feel involved in their children's learning because staff provide a range of informative meetings and workshops. These events help parents to understand how to support their children's learning at home.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 109546 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 10046103 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 695 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Debbie Boshier |
| Headteacher | Coral Champion |
| Telephone number | 01582 430 780 |
| Website | www.maidenhallprimary.co.uk |
| Email address | maidenhall.primary.admin@lbc.luton.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 3–4 March 2015 |

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The ethnicity of most pupils is Asian or Asian British. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language and many are beginners when they start in the early years.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the government's pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class at least once. The majority of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or an assistant headteacher. One inspector attended an assembly.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers (one of whom is the early years leader), the year team leaders, subject leaders, newly qualified and trainee teachers, the school business and resources manager, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator and the inclusion officer. Inspectors also met with the chair of the governing body, two other governors and the local authority improvement adviser.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class, and around the school at break and lunchtimes, to seek their views about the school. They also met with three different groups of pupils more formally to discuss their learning and many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information; minutes from the governing body meetings; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses and 17 texts made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The school's own recent surveys of the views of parents and pupils were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke to some parents before and after school, and during the inspection. Additionally, inspectors took account of the 29 views expressed by members of staff to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------|-------------------------|
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| Susannah Edom-Baker | Ofsted Inspector |
| James Dyke | Ofsted Inspector |
| Teresa Skeggs | Ofsted Inspector |

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