

# Larkrise Primary School

Boundary Brook Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 4AN

## Inspection dates

15–16 May 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Significant changes of staff and leadership have hampered leaders' efforts to make sustained and substantial improvement. Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the school are not sufficiently rigorous or accurate.
- Although there are some strengths in teaching, there are significant weaknesses in teaching in key stages 1 and 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make inadequate progress. The support for these pupils is ineffective.
- Pupils' progress is too variable as a result of weaknesses in teaching. Progress in key stage 1 is inadequate.
- Teachers do not take enough account of pupils' prior learning. Teaching does not meet the needs of all groups of pupils and expectations are too low.
- Safeguarding is not effective. Some pupils do not feel safe in key stages 1 and 2 because of the challenging behaviour of a number of pupils.
- Low-level disruption is typical in many classes and, at times, behaviour is unruly in a few classes.
- The curriculum is not well planned so that pupils develop their skills and knowledge appropriately in a broad range of subjects.
- Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and develop their skills.
- Governors' evaluation of the school is inaccurate. Governors have not ensured that the required statutory information is published on the school's website.
- The support and challenge from the local authority has not been sufficiently robust.

### The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has the confidence of staff. She is working hard to implement changes so that the school can improve.
- Parents and carers support the school well and are very positive about the changes being made to the school.
- In the early years, strong teaching and a nurturing environment mean that children get off to a good, safe start to school.
- Teachers have positive relationships with most pupils.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that:
  - teaching is pitched accurately, offers sufficient challenge and meets the needs of all groups of pupils so that they make consistently good progress
  - teachers raise their expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what pupils can achieve
  - pupils with low starting points, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are given better support to help them make good progress
  - pupils are given more opportunities to write at length and apply their skills in a broad range of subjects across the curriculum.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
  - eliminating low-level disruptive behaviour
  - taking rapid action so that pupils feel safe at all times and are not disturbed by the behaviour of pupils with challenging needs.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders and governors have a more accurate view of the school's work
  - leaders review and improve the support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - subject leaders, the leader for special educational needs and other leaders evaluate more effectively the quality of teaching and learning, including the additional support for pupils
  - the curriculum is planned more rigorously so that pupils can develop their skills, knowledge and understanding well across a range of subjects
  - the school's website meets statutory requirements.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The quality of education at the school has declined since the school was judged to be good at its last full inspection in 2013. Changes in leadership and significant staff turnover have hampered leaders' work to reverse this decline. In September 2017, 11 new teachers joined the school and since then there have been further staff changes. Most senior leaders are currently in acting roles and have only been in post since January 2018. This turbulence has been unsettling and limited leaders' capacity to improve the school.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school are too generous. Although they recognise that improvements need to be made, they have an unrealistic view of the quality of education at the school. Consequently, they have not appreciated fully enough the urgency with which improvement is needed, particularly to the quality of teaching and learning, and to pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders have not taken effective action to ensure that all pupils feel safe in school. Although some pupils in key stages 1 and 2 say that they feel safe, other pupils say that they sometimes feel unsafe because of the unpredictable behaviour of a number of pupils.
- Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy. However, they have not made sure that all staff are following this, or that teachers' expectations of behaviour are high enough. In many classes, there is persistent low-level disruption and some classes are disorderly. As a result, pupils' learning is disrupted significantly.
- The additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils has not had enough impact on improving pupils' attainment. These pupils are not making good progress and few of them are attaining the standards expected for their age. Leaders do not evaluate precisely enough how well the support for disadvantaged pupils is raising pupils' attainment.
- The funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is having a limited impact on their progress. In many classes, individual support is not of good quality and often focused entirely on helping the teacher to manage the behaviour of pupils. Leaders do not have a clear overview of the specific support offered to pupils or evaluate how well this support is working. This lack of strategic oversight and leadership, combined with poor-quality teaching have contributed to the inadequate progress many of these pupils are making.
- Many leaders are relatively new in post and are receiving support from external consultants. They are working hard, with the support of these consultants, to implement changes and provide guidance for other staff. However, they currently have few opportunities to evaluate the quality of learning in their subjects, including pupils' work in books. This limits leaders' understanding of how well pupils are learning, and their contribution and role in helping the school to improve.
- Although leaders have clear aims for the school's curriculum, their plans are still at an early stage of development and lack coherence. The school's curriculum has a clear focus on using a range of story books as a starting point. However, their plans do not

set out the skills and knowledge that pupils will acquire. As a result, pupils are not able to develop their knowledge, skills or understanding to sufficient depth in many subjects.

- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately. For example, pupils learn about the work of Nelson Mandela and organisations that support the homeless. These topics contribute suitably to pupils' understanding of equality, racism and social issues.
- In the short time that the acting headteacher has been in post, she has approached the challenges at the school with a positive outlook. Her hard work and strong relationships have enabled her to harness the support and confidence of the staff. She has also wisely sought and welcomed additional support from the local authority and other external partners.
- Teachers feel well supported by the acting headteacher and other leaders. They appreciate leaders' guidance and the individual feedback they receive following lesson observations. The acting headteacher has implemented many changes. However, it is too soon to see a significant and sustained impact of these changes. Leadership of the early years is effective.
- The local authority has not acted with sufficient haste to stem the decline in the school or provide accurate and unequivocal evaluations of the quality of education at the school. Although local authority representatives have visited the school, they have not challenged leaders and governors sufficiently or moderated the accuracy of their self-evaluation. Therefore, their work has not helped the school to move forward quickly enough.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of education at the school. Despite the information they have been given about the proportion of teaching that is weak, this is not reflected in the school's self-evaluation. Over time, they have not held leaders to account sufficiently for the quality of education and pupils' behaviour.
- Governors have not asked leaders probing enough questions about the progress of disadvantaged pupils or those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Despite the slow progress these pupils made last year, governors have not stepped up their scrutiny of this aspect of the school's work.
- Governors make appropriate checks on aspects of safeguarding including the school's recruitment checks for new staff. They have taken steps to stabilise leadership and have appointed a new and experienced headteacher who will be joining the school in June 2018. They have provided helpful support to leaders during this period of turbulence.
- Governors have not ensured that the school's website includes all of the required statutory information about the curriculum. Other information on the website is out of date, including the school's behaviour policy and links to the most recent Ofsted report from February 2018.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that all pupils feel safe at school. During the inspection, some pupils from different year groups across key stages 1 and 2 told inspectors that they sometimes feel unsafe in school because of the challenging and volatile behaviour of a number of pupils.
- Safeguarding procedures, including the school's recruitment checks, are fully compliant. Leaders have made sure that safeguarding is always on the agenda and that staff are clear about their responsibilities. When needed, they make referrals to other agencies in a timely manner and work in partnership with key professionals to support pupils and their families.
- The school arranges for other organisations, such as Childline, to visit the school and provide important guidance to pupils to help them learn about personal safety.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Wide variations in the quality of teaching within some year groups and across key stages 1 and 2 are evident. While there are some pockets of strong practice, this is overshadowed by the high proportion of weak teaching, particularly in key stage 1. As a result, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching does not cater well enough for pupils' different needs and abilities, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Consequently, these groups of pupils are not achieving well. In addition, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.
- There is a culture of low expectations. Teachers do not consistently follow the school's behaviour policy or address pupils' poor behaviour. In many classes, pupils do not settle quickly to learning and low-level disruption is the norm, preventing pupils from learning well. In some classrooms pupils are unable to learn without significant distraction. In these classes, pupils' work lacks care and pride, and some pupils' books contain many pieces of uncompleted work.
- Some teachers do not use questioning well to deepen pupils' learning or confirm pupils' understanding. Misconceptions and errors in pupils' work are not picked up promptly by teachers. This leads to pupils repeating simple mistakes, for example in the punctuation of their writing.
- In English and in other subjects, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to develop their writing. In some classes, the focus for pupils' writing shifts frequently. This means that pupils do not have time to build on their skills and deepen their learning.
- In parts of the school, teachers are now including more opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics. This is improving pupils' reasoning skills. However, not all teachers have adopted this approach, which is yet to be fully established across the school.

- There are some positive features to teaching in the school. Teachers are warm and supportive, and have good relationships with the pupils. The school has some talented teachers who are providing coaching and support to others and model good practice.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- While some pupils feel safe at school, others say that they are sometimes anxious and do not feel safe because of the behaviour of a number of pupils. Pupils appreciate the support adults give them.
- Pupils are confident that, if something has upset them, they can speak to an adult in school. They say that bullying does not happen very often and that teachers deal with any incidents well. Pupils also value the diversity of their different cultures and understand that not everyone has the same beliefs.
- Leaders have sensibly reviewed and increased their support for pupils with very complex and challenging needs. The school's new provision for these pupils provides a safe and calming space, away from the classroom, where staff can work individually with pupils. This has enhanced the support for pupils' emotional and personal development. However, leaders have not yet evaluated with sufficient rigour the impact of this new provision on pupils' personal development.
- Sports clubs and opportunities to take part in the samba band enrich and widen pupils' experiences and enjoyment of school. Pupils' personal development and learning are enhanced by opportunities to learn outdoors and through visits.
- Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the rewards that they are encouraged to earn, such as the school's 'wow' cards. They enjoy the weekly 'circles times' including the chance to take part in decision-making and the opportunity to work with pupils in different year groups.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, report that their children enjoy school. Nevertheless, the written comments from a small number of parents express concern about the behaviour of pupils and the frequent staff changes.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to improve pupils' behaviour in key stages 1 and 2. In many classes, pupils' learning is hindered because of persistent low-level disruption. At times, the behaviour in classes is unruly, which causes too many pupils to feel unsafe.
- Although pupils are aware of the school's new behaviour rules, 'ready, respectful, safe,' many do not demonstrate these in their own behaviour. For example, in some classes, pupils do not listen to adults, call out and ignore adults' requests. However,

where teaching is strong, pupils' behaviour is respectful, polite and very settled.

- In the last school year, fixed-term exclusions rose significantly and there continue to be a very high number of exclusions and incidents of very poor behaviour. Encouragingly, since January, these have begun to decline.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve attendance. As a result, during this school year overall attendance has improved and is now close to the national average. Rates of persistent absence have reduced for all groups of pupils. However, attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities remain below the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Pupils in key stage 1 are making inadequate progress because teaching is inadequate overall. In classes across the school, disruptive behaviour and teachers' low expectations inhibit pupils' progress.
- In many classes, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and do not learn as well as they could. This is because teachers do not take enough account of pupils' starting points and tasks limit the opportunity for pupils to develop a deeper level of learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with low starting points, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, are making inadequate progress. These pupils' needs are not met and leaders do not evaluate the impact of the support for these groups.
- In 2017, few disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standards at the end of key stage 2 and none attained the higher standards. Their progress was far too slow, particularly in reading and mathematics, and was much slower than that of other pupils. There was a similar picture for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- In many subjects, pupils are making very slow progress. The curriculum is poorly planned and does not ensure that pupils can build on their previous knowledge and skills as they move through the school. As a consequence, pupils repeat similar tasks that require the same level of skill. For example, they repeat basic tasks in history such as constructing simple chronologies.
- Pupils' writing is not developed well and pupils are not building on their skills and acquiring sufficient depth to their learning. Aspects of pupils' writing such as their punctuation are not addressed well by teachers. Consequently, this aspect of pupils' writing is weak. Handwriting across the school lacks a consistency of approach. This is reflected in the low standards of presentation in many pupils' writing.
- In contrast, the current Year 6 pupils are making good progress and attaining well. These pupils benefit from strong teaching and a positive learning climate. However, this is not the case in other year groups. There are significant variations in pupils' progress which reflect the wide disparity in the quality of teaching from class to class and between year groups. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## Early years provision

## Good

- The early years leader provides good leadership. She has ensured that teaching and learning are good and that children have a happy and positive start to school. The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. This part of the school has benefited from stable and consistently good teaching.
- The proportion of children who attain the expected 'good level of development' is similar to the national average and there has been an upward trend since 2015. Although disadvantaged children attain less well than other children, they make good progress from their starting points. The school's 'learning journeys' show that current children are making good progress. The gaps between the attainment of children who have SEN and/or disabilities and their peers are closing.
- Relationships are strong, and adults are warm and supportive of children. This helps children to be confident and feel secure in the setting. The safeguarding issues in key stages 1 and 2 are not evident in the early years. Children are attentive, approach their learning with positive attitudes and behave well. They also demonstrate good levels of independence. For example, children get themselves organised and put on their wellies in readiness for their forest school sessions.
- Teachers plan and organise an appealing range of interesting activities that sustain children's attention and help them to learn well in all aspects of the curriculum. During child-initiated learning time, adults support and guide children's learning effectively through well-timed questions and prompts.
- Children's physical skills are particularly well catered for and the outdoor environment includes many opportunities for children to climb and to balance. Children benefit from and enjoy the problem-solving activities on offer such as making ramps for their scooters, constructing their own slide and trying to fly their paper aeroplanes.
- Children make a good start to learning to read and apply their skills well when reading and writing. Adults model sounds accurately and quickly spot and address any misconceptions. Early writing is promoted well and a range of writing and mark-making tools are available for children to use. For example, during the week of the inspection, children in the Nursery enjoyed writing and decorating party invitations. As one child commented, 'It's so lovely, I think I will take this home.'
- The early years leader tracks children's progress carefully and adapts activities to meet children's needs and interests. Her careful analysis revealed that boys were not making as much progress as girls in writing. As a result, teachers adapted the learning activities to make them more appealing for boys, for example by including writing in the construction area.
- Early years staff have strong partnerships with parents. Home visits are carried out prior to children starting Nursery and there are good transition arrangements in place. Children's happy, settled start and good progress mean that they are well prepared for key stage 1. Parents appreciate the opportunity to share their children's learning from home through the 'wow cards'.

## School details

Unique reference number	123053
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10048971

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Hadfield and Paul Stockdale (Co-chairs)
Acting Headteacher	Charlotte Stewart
Telephone number	01865 721476
Website	<a href="http://www.larkrise.oxon.sch.uk">www.larkrise.oxon.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:reception@larkrise.oxon.sch.uk">reception@larkrise.oxon.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018

## Information about this school

- The previous headteacher left the school in December 2017. Since then the school has been led by the acting headteacher who has been in post since January 2018. A new headteacher has been appointed and will be joining the school in June.
- The early years consists of two classes in Reception and one class in Nursery. Most children attend Nursery on a part-time basis.
- The school is currently receiving additional support from the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club, both of which are run by the school.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and the most recent Ofsted report on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups, sometimes accompanied by the acting headteacher. Inspectors also made short visits to classes and observed two assemblies. During visits to classrooms inspectors talked with pupils about their learning and evaluated the quality of pupils' work in books. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and met with a group of pupils from Years 2 to 5.
- Inspectors held three meetings with leaders to review the quality of pupils' work in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktimes and lunchtime, in assemblies and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, senior leaders and other staff. The lead inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the co-chairs of the governing body.
- Two inspectors met with parents at the beginning of the first day of the inspection. Inspectors took into account the 188 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as parents' written comments. The views of staff were gathered through discussions with them.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documents, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation, policies and minutes of meetings. They reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children, and checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Dunmall	Ofsted Inspector
Dorota Milner	Ofsted Inspector

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