

Wenlock CofE Junior School

Beaconsfield, Luton, Bedfordshire LU2 0RW

| Inspection dates | 12–13 January 2016 |
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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 |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within year groups and across the school. Although there is much good teaching, there is too much that requires improvement. As a result, not enough pupils make good or better progress from starting points that are generally above average.
- The checks that school leaders make on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are too generous at times. They do not always reflect the standards being achieved at the school or the quality of work that was seen in pupils' books during this inspection.
- Not all teachers use assessment effectively to check on pupils' understanding during lessons in order to adapt tasks and modify the level of challenge.
- Disadvantaged pupils make slower progress from their different starting points than other pupils. Consequently, the gap in attainment between these pupils and their peers is getting wider.
- The teaching of reading requires improvement. Pupils of lower ability do not read regularly enough in school or at home and, in some classes, the most-able pupils are not taught more advanced reading skills effectively. In 2015, too few pupils made good progress in reading or reached the higher levels at the end of Year 6.
- The work that pupils are given in subjects such as science, history and geography often lacks challenge, particularly for the most able. Pupils rarely write at length in these subjects and do not make the progress of which they are capable in these important aspects of the curriculum.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. School leaders, including governors, have ensured that the school provides a safe and nurturing environment for pupils.
- The school is a harmonious place for pupils of all faiths and cultures to learn. Pupils are cared for extremely well. School leaders have ensured that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given high priority.
- Pupils enjoy school. Attendance rates are above the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that pupils read often and widely and that the most able are provided with greater levels of challenge when being taught more advanced aspects of reading
 - using additional funding more effectively to support disadvantaged pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment well in lessons to check pupils' understanding and move learning on at an appropriate rate.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the checks made on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment accurately reflect pupils' progress and attainment
 - ensuring that pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding across the whole curriculum
 - improving governors' understanding of pupils' performance data and the quality of teaching so that they can challenge school leaders more effectively.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders are too positive in their judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Although they undertake regular lesson observations, these focus too much on what teachers do rather than how well pupils are learning. Consequently, efforts to improve teaching have had mixed impact and the progress that pupils make is not as good as it should be. In 2015, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average.
 - School leaders have not ensured that the additional funding that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils has been used effectively to raise their achievement. Leaders do not check closely enough on the impact of any additional support that these pupils receive in order to establish whether or not strategies are successful.
 - Pupils are not given enough opportunities to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects such as science, geography, history and computing. Much of the work seen in these subjects lacks challenge and, too often, teachers fail to check pupils' work accurately to see whether they are making progress in their learning.
 - Good training opportunities are provided for teachers and teaching assistants but there is more to do to ensure that all members of staff understand the key aspects of good teaching and learning. The school has the capacity for sustained improvement as there are enough strong teachers across the school to influence the work of other staff.
 - The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength and has a high profile within the school. Pupils gain a good understanding of what makes a good citizen in modern Britain through the school's 'Values' curriculum. Pupils regularly discuss issues such as respect, honesty, democracy, freedom and tolerance.
 - The school has made good use of its sports premium funding. The funding has been used to appoint specialist coaches who support teachers in lessons and also run a number of clubs after school. The funding has also enabled the school to participate in a wider range of inter-school sporting events.
 - Parents are supportive of the school. Almost all of the responses on Parent View were positive, as were the responses to the school's own survey. Most parents would recommend the school to others. Parents rightly believe that their children are well looked after at the school and safe while there. Staff are also supportive of the school's leadership team.
 - The local authority provides regular support to the school. However, it has not been aware of the weaknesses within the curriculum and teaching and learning. Consequently, it has not been able to challenge school leaders effectively about standards, or support those aspects of the school that require improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
- The governing body is over-reliant on senior leaders when making judgements about how well the school is performing. For example, the governors spoken with during this inspection had an understanding of the recent dip in Year 6 results but were not aware of exactly how far standards had fallen or the weaknesses in other areas of the curriculum. As a result, governors have not been able to challenge school leaders successfully about standards and have not been successful in ensuring that there are clear links between pay and performance.
 - Governors have played a significant role in developing the school's inclusive and nurturing ethos. They are extremely committed to the school and recognise the need to provide better levels of challenge, and contribute more fully to the school's evaluation of its work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective. Records are kept meticulously and staff receive appropriate training. School leaders ensure that comprehensive checks are made on all adults who work regularly with pupils. Pupils report that they feel very safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school. Although observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' books indicate that there is some good and outstanding teaching, not enough is consistently good or better. As a result, too few pupils make good or rapid progress, and attainment by the end of Year 6 is not high enough.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers fail to make regular assessments of how well pupils are learning in lessons in order to reshape activities, where necessary, to ensure that the level of challenge provided promotes good progress. In some of the lessons seen, the most-able pupils spent too much time waiting for others to catch up.
- The teaching of reading requires improvement. Pupils who are struggling to read when they start at the school in Year 3 do not read regularly enough, either at home or at school. Although they are given additional teaching in phonics (the sounds that letters make), not enough attention is given to the development of other aspects of reading, such as comprehension and fluency. When teaching pupils of higher ability, teachers often fail to ask questions that challenge pupils to think more deeply about the text that they are reading, for example, by finding clues in the text and reading 'between the lines' to see what is being inferred by the author.
- Writing is generally taught well in English lessons. Teachers plan work that interests pupils, often based on a book theme. Teachers ensure that pupils' work is marked in line with the school's marking policy, and often provide good advice on what pupils need to do next to improve their work. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write in other subject areas. This limits the progress in writing that pupils make across the school, particularly those of higher ability.
- Most teachers plan and teach mathematics effectively, but in some classes teachers fail to identify basic errors in pupils' knowledge and understanding when marking pupils' work. For example, in a lesson on angles, one pupil had written that a right-angled triangle has to have two sides of the same length. This was marked as correct. Failing to identify errors such as this means that pupils develop misconceptions, which limit the progress that they make.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in subjects other than mathematics and English. The work seen in science, geography and history books was often lacking in challenge. The Year 6 pupils who spoke to the lead inspector about computing were extremely keen on the subject. However, they had had little experience of the new computing curriculum, for example by using their knowledge and enthusiasm to write computer programs or using a range of digital devices to support their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are usually taught and supported well. Assessments and teaching plans for these pupils are well devised. Regular checks are made to gauge how much progress pupils are making.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The quality of care, guidance and support helps to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective.
- The school's strong ethos is underpinned by a commitment to a set of core values which are regularly reviewed in assemblies and in lessons. This focus supports pupils' social and emotional development extremely well. As a result, pupils enjoy school, are proud to wear their uniform and attend regularly.
- Pupils feel safe at the school. The school building is welcoming and secure. Classrooms and corridors are well looked after and contain many displays that celebrate pupils' work and reinforce the school's values and positive ethos.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and the school's own survey rightly believe that their children are well cared for and safe while in school. Parents told inspectors that they appreciate and value the work that school staff undertake to support pupils and their families.
- On the rare occasions when incidents of bullying occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupils know whom to go to if they are concerned about their safety, and the school teaches children how to keep themselves safe. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take, and are taught well about how to stay safe when using the internet.

- Pupils enjoy the additional responsibilities they are given to support different aspects of school life. For example, older pupils act as play leaders during breaktimes, organising resources and leading games in the playground.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They are supportive of each other in class; they cooperate well and have very good attitudes to learning. However, these positive attitudes are not always reflected in pupils' work in books, as presentation and handwriting are not always as good as they should be.
- Pupils' conduct during breaks and dinnertime is exemplary. Across the school, pupils are friendly and respectful towards each other and the adults who teach them.
- Pupils attend regularly and very few are persistently absent. Attendance has been above the national average for the past three years.
- Pupils attend The Lighthouse Provision, a behaviour unit, due to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties that have resulted in their being at risk of exclusion. Records show that this unit is successful in improving behaviour and reintegrating pupils back into their schools.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics fell below the national average for the first time in 2015. This was because too few pupils made good or better progress from their starting points at the beginning of Year 3, which were generally above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in writing at the end of Year 6 has been around the national average for the past three years. However, during this period, too few pupils have achieved the higher levels. The work seen in pupils' English books during this inspection shows that most current pupils are making good progress. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English are too infrequent. This limits the progress that pupils make in writing, particularly those of higher ability.
- In both 2013 and 2014, disadvantaged pupils, for whom the school receives additional funding, achieved well. However, the progress that these pupils made in 2015 was slower than that of their peers. As a result, the gap in attainment between them and other pupils nationally widened.
- Although most pupils are competent readers by the time they leave Year 6, overall, pupils do not achieve well enough in reading. Younger pupils who struggle with their reading do not read often enough either at school or at home. The most-able pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging reading activities. This prevents them from making the progress of which they are capable.
- Attainment in mathematics has been around the national average for the past two years. However, this does not represent good progress for many pupils who began Year 3 with high levels of attainment. Too few of these pupils make expected progress and fail to attain the higher levels by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those who arrive at school at different times during the school year, receive good pastoral support and settle into school life well. They make progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well. The special education needs coordinator regularly reviews their progress and ensures that appropriate support is provided where necessary. Good systems are in place and pupils currently in school are making good progress from their various starting points.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 109633 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 10003468 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 347 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Adams |
| Headteacher | Deborah Williams |
| Telephone number | 01582 730624 |
| Website | www.wenlockjunior.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@wenlockjunior.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 9–10 March 2011 |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) for whom the school receives additional government funding through the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is around the national average.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school hosts The Lighthouse Provision, a unit for pupils aged between seven and 11 who have behavioural, social and emotional needs. It serves schools in the east neighbourhood of Luton. There are currently five pupils attending, and the unit has a capacity of six.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 26 lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed other aspects of the school's work, including an assembly.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and subject leaders for mathematics and English.
- The lead inspector spoke with governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their experience of school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read, and discussed reading and other aspects of school life.
- Inspectors spoke with parents before school and scrutinised the 19 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, along with the results of the school's own survey. They also considered 36 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to the school's safeguarding arrangements, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Paul Tomkow, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Diane Hawkes | Ofsted Inspector |
| Pauline Macmillan | Ofsted Inspector |
| Susan Watts | Ofsted Inspector |

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