

# Wenlock CofE Junior School

Beaconsfield Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU2 0RW

## Inspection dates

### Overall effectiveness

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

6–7 February 2018

**Requires improvement**

**Requires improvement**

**Requires improvement**

**Good**

**Requires improvement**

Requires improvement

Areas we need to work on are in lilac

areas that are working well in green

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

**This is a school that requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Where teaching is good, pupils make good progress, but this is not consistent across the whole school.
- Assessment information is not used well. At times, teachers do not plan activities to match pupils' needs. Not all pupils achieve as well as they can, especially the most able.
- Teachers' expectations are sometimes not high enough. Across the wider curriculum, too few pupils make sufficient progress.

- Leaders are taking the correct actions to bring about improvement, but many are new and the full impact is yet to be seen.
- Teachers do not consistently provide enough opportunity for pupils to deepen and apply their basic skills when working independently.
- Many staff find the school's assessment system unclear. Leaders are occasionally unable to identify accurately strengths and weaknesses of the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Safeguarding is strong. Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Leaders promote the ethos and values of the school well. Pupils and staff demonstrate these values. This is a calm and harmonious community.
- The 'Lighthouse Provision' ensures that vulnerable pupils are well supported. The needs of these pupils are extremely well met.

- Governance has improved considerably since the last inspection. Governors are committed and know the school well.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Leaders have created a caring and nurturing environment for pupils

## **Full report**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and thereby outcomes for pupils by:
  - raising teachers' expectations to ensure that all pupils are provided with suitable and challenging learning activities, especially the most able
  - ensuring that assessment information is used accurately to plan work that meets the needs of pupils in all subjects across the curriculum
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their basic skills across the wider curriculum.
  
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - bringing the practice of all teachers securely up to that of the best
  - continuing to develop the role of middle leaders so they drive improvement in their areas of responsibility and are able to measure accurately the impact of their actions on pupils' progress
  - refining the accuracy of the school's assessment system to ensure that it supports leaders in evaluating the impact of their actions more precisely.

## **Information about this inspection**

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons. Seven lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also carried out learning walks to observe the quality of the wider curriculum, pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors also observed a whole-school assembly led by a visiting author.
- Inspectors assessed the quality of pupils' work by scrutinising a considerable range of written work for subjects across the curriculum.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, staff, pupils and governors. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority and held a telephone conversation with the deputy director for education of the Diocese of St Albans.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' achievement, records of the school's safeguarding arrangements and records of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to parents in the playground. Account was also taken of the 15 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and five responses by pupils and 17 staff responses to their online questionnaires.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- There have been a considerable number of staff changes since the last inspection, which leaders and governors have managed. Many leaders – including middle leaders – are still relatively new to their roles. This means that improvements since the previous inspection have not been as rapid as the school would have liked.
- Leaders are aware of, and are taking, the necessary actions to improve the school. However, many of their changes are new and are not yet fully secure. This means the full benefit of their actions cannot be seen. For example, the new leader of mathematics has introduced a comprehensive calculation policy and a new way of structuring lessons. Inspection evidence shows that teachers and pupils are implementing this policy. This is improving pupils' calculation skills. However, it is too early to see rapid progress in mathematics across the school.
- Leaders have introduced a new assessment system to the school. Leaders and governors acknowledge that the system is not fully developed or wholly understood by all teachers. As a result, some assessment information on how well pupils are achieving is imprecise. This means that some leaders' judgements on the strengths and weaknesses of the school are not entirely accurate.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. Each class has a 'Big Book', which showcases the coverage of the wider curriculum. However, despite pupils having access to a wide curriculum, leaders do not check how well they achieve in these subjects.
- Leaders effectively identify pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They provide focused intervention programmes to make sure that pupils' specific needs are met. This is especially evident in the 'Lighthouse Provision' where pupils' academic and emotional needs are met well.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is being used effectively. Leaders have identified the barriers faced by this group of pupils and have clear strategies in place to help them overcome them. For example, pupils in Year 4 have access to a mathematics programme which helps them to make accelerated progress.
- Leaders make effective use of the physical education and sport premium. Pupils have access to a range of extra-curricular clubs and the opportunity to compete in inter-school competitions. The school team is the current tug-of-war champion in the local group of schools.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Leaders have created a culture which promotes and celebrates values throughout the school. A Year 3 pupil showed inspectors the school's 'values tree' and told them, 'The values tree inspires children to follow the values and make a difference.' Pupils are rightly proud if they are nominated as a 'values champion' at the end of each half term.

### Governance of the school

- Governance has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now strong. Governors are very committed and know the school well. They use their increased understanding of pupil-progress information to hold school leaders to greater account. Governors have undertaken regular training to improve their knowledge and skills, including governor 'away days'. They evaluate their effectiveness well, and seek external advice where needed to become even more effective.

■ Governors regularly visit the school to monitor their areas of responsibility. During these visits, they ask challenging questions of school leaders. They have a clear understanding of what is, and what is not, working in their school. For example, governor minutes show that they have identified that middle leaders' work needs time to demonstrate impact on pupils' progress. They also acknowledge that the new assessment system is still being developed and needs more time before the full benefit is seen.

• The governors hold leaders to account for safeguarding very effectively.

## Safeguarding

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

■ Safeguarding is strong because leaders have created a culture of vigilance. They know their pupils well, and staff at all levels are clear about the action to take should they have a concern.

■ The designated lead for safeguarding is well trained and keeps detailed records of concerns, including how they are followed through. Referrals are made to other agencies if appropriate. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure that their knowledge and skills are up to date.

■ The single central record of the suitability of staff meets all statutory requirements, and pre-employment checks on staff are carried out thoroughly.

■ Pupils are safe in school and their parents and carers agree. Pupils know who to speak to if they do not feel safe or have a problem. They are taught how to stay safe, especially when using the internet. Pupils told inspectors that they receive 'good support from the school to keep safe'.

■ Governors make regular visits to the school to check on how effective safeguarding is. Through their monitoring, they know that the school is meeting all statutory requirements.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

■ The quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent. Where teaching is most effective, pupils make good progress. However, teaching in some areas is less effective because teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. This means that work is not sufficiently challenging, especially for most-able pupils, and they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

■ Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to plan learning which will

offer appropriate challenge for pupils. When teachers plan learning well, pupils rise to the challenge and produce good-quality work. For example, in a Year 6 writing lesson, the teacher provided a good level of challenge because she clearly knew what pupils needed to do to improve. Consequently, pupils produced high-quality writing based on the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. However, this approach is not consistent across the school. In a Year 3 lesson, a pupil told inspectors, 'I'm bored – it's too easy', and in a Year 5 lesson a pupil said, 'The work here is too easy; it was harder in my old school.'

There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the wider curriculum. Work in pupils' books shows that, over time, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Pupils do not make enough progress in subjects such as geography, history and science. Work in pupils' books also shows that there are inconsistencies in the opportunities pupils have to apply and deepen their writing skills across the curriculum.

• Additional adults are used effectively in lessons. They support pupils well and use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding. In many lessons seen during the inspection,

additional adults helped pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to become more independent and less reliant on adult support. The needs of this group of pupils are well met.

- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and they apply themselves well, despite work being too easy for them in some lessons. There are positive relationships between pupils and adults.
- Pupils have responded well to the introduction of a new reading initiative. As a result, pupils are more engaged in reading. They read regularly and all pupils who read to an inspector said they enjoy reading. One pupil in Year 5 told an inspector, 'When I was in Year 3 and 4, I barely read, but now because of the new system I really want to read.'
- During the inspection, a visiting author led an assembly, which provided pupils with further inspiration to read.
- Teachers promote pupils' oracy skills well. Pupils are articulate and their spoken language skills are good. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were able to take part in a lively discussion when constructing a 'balanced argument' and could argue their corner when challenged.

## **Personal development, behaviour and Welfare Good**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils learn about a wide range of different religions; displays around the school represent a range of religions and cultures. They have a good awareness of the similarities and differences within the whole school community, and embrace these differences. As a result of this ethos, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- 'The Lighthouse Provision' is a strong feature of the school's work. It offers a wide range of strategies to support the emotional well-being of pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion from local schools. These pupils have complex needs, but staff meet these needs extremely well through delivering a curriculum which engages and

stimulates previously reluctant learners.

- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in a range of extra-curricular clubs. These include sporting clubs – karate, dodgeball, netball and football – along with a choir. The choir has successfully taken part in a performance at the O2 arena in London.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are aware of different forms of bullying. Pupils said that bullying is rare, but if it happens it is quickly dealt with by adults. Parents agreed, and one parent told an inspector, 'There is very little bullying.'
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. There is a school council, along with 'junior road safety officers'. Pupils with responsibilities are proud of these additional roles.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have created a calm, caring environment for pupils. Parents agreed. As one said, 'The school is a happy, nurturing environment that focuses on the development of the whole child.'

- Pupils display positive attitudes in lessons and around the school. They are polite to one another and to adults. Pupils are proud of their school and said, 'The school is fair and gives us lots of support.'
- Pupils' conduct during break and lunchtime is good. They talk socially and interact well with each other. Pupils are well supervised at lunchtime and have confidence that lunchtime staff will help them if any problems arise.
- Attendance is in line with the national average for all pupils. Leaders have worked hard to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and have been successful in doing so.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

■ The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 increased rapidly between 2016 and 2017. In 2017, this proportion was broadly in line with the national average. However, the progress pupils made was below average, especially for the most able pupils, with their progress in reading and writing being significantly below the national average. Pupils made better progress in mathematics.

■ In reading and writing, progress is improving for different groups of pupils with similar starting points. However, because the quality of teaching across the school is not yet consistently good, pupils' progress is variable. Some pupils who need to catch up do not have the opportunity to do so, and most-able pupils do not make the progress they should.

■ In mathematics, because of the actions taken by the subject leader, pupils now make better progress. Inspection evidence shows that some lower-ability pupils have made rapid progress in developing their calculation skills. However, progress in mathematics

is not yet consistently good because the new initiatives are not yet fully secure.

■ Evidence in a wide range of books and folders shows that pupils across the school do not make consistently strong progress across the wider curriculum. They do not consistently develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects such as science, geography and history.

■ Historically, disadvantaged pupils have not made as much progress as they should. However, leaders have raised their expectations of this group of pupils well. This means they are now making good progress from their varied starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.

■ Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported through a range of specific interventions. This additional support meets the needs of this group of pupils. Consequently, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points.

■ Pupils in the 'Lighthouse Provision' resource base make good progress, both academically and emotionally. Inspection evidence shows that some pupils enter the provision working at standards considerably below their chronological age. However, because of the good support they receive, pupils make rapid progress to help them catch up.