

# Leigh Beck Infant School and Nursery Academy

Point Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 7TD

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and leadership team have led dramatic improvement in all areas of provision. The work of the executive headteacher is praised by governors, staff, pupils and parents and carers alike. Since becoming an academy, the whole school, especially the early years foundation stage, has been transformed.
- Pupils' academic attainment in key stage 1 and early years is now in line with that of pupils nationally and particularly strong in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. At break and lunchtimes, pupils get on very well together.
- The school's curriculum is interesting and engaging. It encourages a love of learning across a wide range of subjects. Leaders recognise that checking pupils' progress in national curriculum foundation subjects is not as well developed as it is for English and mathematics.
- Pupils are cared for very well. Staff are passionate about ensuring pupils' well-being and safety.
- Teaching is effective. Pupils respond well to the highly structured approaches to learning. The regular training for teachers and support staff has brought about great improvements in learning.
- Attendance is hugely improved, but in this school too much learning time is missed due to term-time holidays.
- While the gap in attainment between boys and girls narrows between pupils beginning school and ending key stage 1, the gap still exists.
- Pupils' moral and social development is strong, but leaders recognise that pupils' spiritual and cultural development is not yet sufficient to prepare them well enough for life in modern Britain.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' achievement further by:
  - making use of the strong practices seen in the delivery of mathematics and English to improve the outcomes in other national curriculum subjects
  - continuing to put emphasis on ensuring that the progress and the attainment of boys are as good as those of girls in the early years and key stage 1.
- Build on current work to promote and strengthen pupils' spiritual and cultural development to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to understand and participate in life in modern Britain.
- Improve attendance further by building on the strategies introduced to reduce persistent absence and ensure that parents understand the importance of regular school attendance and the impact of taking holidays in term time.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Over the last four years, the uncompromising ambition and determination of the executive headteacher and those of other leaders and governors have brought about dramatic improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, assessment, pupils' behaviour, the curriculum and pupils' outcomes.
- Staff at all levels are well motivated and exceptionally positive about the school and its leadership and management. All staff responding to Ofsted's online anonymous survey enjoy working at the school and agree that leaders are considerate of their well-being. A typical comment was: 'All decisions and changes are trialled first before being rolled out to staff to ensure workload is kept to a minimum.'
- Leaders have introduced a curriculum that engages pupils' interest. It covers the full range of national curriculum subjects. Leaders check how well pupils acquire the knowledge and skills specific to the various subjects, but this is not yet as well developed as it is for English and mathematics. There is a relentless process of continuous self-evaluation and searching for ways to do things better. For example, the curriculum is being reviewed this summer to provide greater subject-specific challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Leaders place a high emphasis on participation in music and sport. For example, pupils in Year 2 participate in weekly music and physical education (PE) sessions taught by teachers who are subject specialists.
- Leadership at all levels is highly effective. New subject leaders are developing appropriate skills rapidly through training provided by the multi-academy trust (MAT) and are mentored by experienced leaders. Teachers understand and share the executive headteacher's vision and plan. Effective succession planning through the MAT ensures that the changes to the culture run deep and the capacity for further improvement is secure.
- The quality of teaching has risen partly because of the regular and highly valued programme of training throughout the year provided across the MAT's two schools. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, and leaders have invested in regular training for them.
- There is a clear strategy for the effective use of the PE and sports additional funding. The PE funding is succeeding in making pupils more active and extending the range of PE and sports available; for example, there are lots of new clubs and activities such as basketball, cheerleading, ball skills and athletics. Half of the pupils attend after-school sports activities, and there is a lot of new equipment in the playground paid for from the funding.
- Leaders and teachers have a very secure understanding of information regarding their pupils' progress. Leaders challenge staff rigorously and, in turn, leaders are held to account by MAT directors and governors.
- The spending of the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils is monitored very carefully. Leaders have identified that, for many, speech and communication are a

particular barrier to learning in the early years, and they have targeted additional interventions to address this. Similarly, in Year 1, disadvantaged children spend time each day reading to an adult. The positive impact of these interventions is apparent in the information on pupils' progress reported in the outcomes section.

- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well, and as a result they are making good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders make an important contribution to the education system in the wider community of schools on Canvey Island. For example, the executive headteacher is the chair of the Canvey Island headteachers' group. The rapid improvement plan she wrote for her own school has been used in schools in North Essex, Norfolk and Southampton. Other senior leaders have been seconded to the local authority to support school improvement.
- Pupils' moral and social growth is central to all aspects of the school's activity, but this is more evident than their spiritual and cultural development. For example, pupils are aware of fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law, but are less exposed to role models from different cultures and backgrounds in modern Britain.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is undertaken by the MAT directors and by the local governing body. Together, they are very effective. Governors bring a wealth of expertise representing education and the local community. Governors hold leaders to account. They meet their statutory duties by, for example, checking safeguarding. Due to a combination of very recent circumstances, the local governing body has vacancies and has a new chair. Although inexperienced in this role, she knows the strengths and areas for further development in the school very well. She brings educational experience and expertise that is highly valuable in challenging and supporting senior leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

- Leaders are very aware of the safety and welfare needs of their pupils. Staff are diligent in ensuring that secure arrangements for child protection are in place. All statutory requirements are met. Most importantly, pupils said that they feel safe. Parents and staff agree.
- Staff are vigilant in looking out for pupils' well-being and reporting any concerns. This enables leaders to build an overview. Records of liaison with external agencies are well maintained and very clear.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The quality of teaching has risen through a combination of training, checking and effective performance management.
- Lessons are characterised by effective planning that ensures that lessons flow well.

Teachers have clear expectations of pupils. Lessons are fun, enjoyable and engaging.

- Challenge for the most able pupils is mostly provided effectively. Pupils' vocabulary is developed well. Pupils who are identified as 'leaders of learning' work really well when in small groups or pairs, but are sometimes less successful in large groups, where the leaders can dominate and, as a result, less-able pupils occasionally give up. Sometimes, pupils are not quite sure of what they need to do because explanations or use of technical language are not clear.
- Well-established routines maximise learning time. Pupils work well together, getting on with tasks. Classrooms are bright and engaging, with, for example, working walls aiding learning in core subjects. Pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects, but using staff expertise to promote greater depth in the foundation subjects is the priority for the next staff training days.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics enables them to teach confidently and effectively. There is effective support from teaching assistants, who are increasingly skilled because of their weekly training. As a result, lower-ability pupils are supported well most of the time.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is usually a strength. It helps pupils to develop their thinking and enables teachers to quickly check pupils' understanding.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported, through additional support out of lessons and through support in the classroom.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are proud of the school. They clearly love it. Very nearly all parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their child is happy at school and looked after well.
- Pupils, staff and parents believe they are safe. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of internet safety. They are aware of how to stay safe on trips, value the on-site security and speak with authority about what to do in fire drills.
- Staff know pupils really well and can quickly spot and pass on any concerns regarding their welfare.
- The personal development for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable or looked after by the local authority is given priority, and they are cared for particularly well.
- There is a wide range of additional supportive activities and clubs involving music and sport, but also additional support for learning. A feature of the school is that throughout the day groups of children are to be found working or playing with adults

all around the school.

- Parents are involved well, through the parent council. Typical of their comments is: 'I have nothing but praise for this school. The children are extremely well looked after and are made to feel like individuals by every member of staff from the outset.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons and in assembly, pupils' behaviour is very good and makes a very positive contribution to learning. Pupils respond to teachers' instructions speedily. This ensures that learning time is used very productively.
- Parents, pupils and staff agree that behaviour is at least good.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and love learning. However, attendance at this and the predecessor school has been historically low. Over the last three years, attendance has improved sharply because leaders are taking every action available to them in order to try to improve attendance and especially for pupils whose records fall into the category of persistent absence. Attendance is adversely affected by term-time holidays.

## Outcomes for pupils

### Good

- In the summer 2017 national tests, pupils' results at the end of key stage 1 were above average for both the proportion reaching the expected standard and the proportion reaching a higher level, in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected level was in line with the average for all pupils nationally.
- The school has been highly successful in encouraging a love of reading. Pupils enjoy reading and quickly develop reading skills because reading is expertly taught from the moment children enter the school. As a result, in 2016 the school's results in the national Year 1 phonics screening check were a little above average and in 2017 even more above average.
- In mathematics, the 2017 end of key stage 1 national tests show pupils' outcomes to be above average. In writing, although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was above average, the proportion reaching the higher level was below average. Attainment in science was above average. Overall, boys do not do as well as girls. The gap is particularly evident in the early years, but narrows as pupils become older.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have their progress monitored carefully. They make good progress from their starting points, especially in writing.
- The current school information shows that disadvantaged pupils often perform as well as and, in some cases, better than all pupils in the school. Overall, disadvantaged

pupils make progress that is in line with that of other pupils with similar starting points, because leaders monitor their progress carefully and target them with appropriate interventions.

- Assessments are very well moderated, including by external assessors beyond the MAT, to ensure their validity. Several of the MAT's staff are experienced moderators. Inspectors' observations confirm that pupils' work reflects the school's assessments of current attainment.
- Leaders recognise that, despite the effective work in English and mathematics, there is a need to provide greater subject-specific stretch, especially for the most able pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Leaders have positively transformed early years provision. The environment is bright, well resourced and stimulating.
- Overall, children enter Reception and Nursery with the skills and knowledge expected for their age. For the last two years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been above average. The proportion of disadvantaged children reaching it is a little below the national average for all pupils.
- A small number of children, mostly boys, are working below the standards expected for their age, and generally this is because of speech and language challenges. Teachers have put in interventions to address this and check their impact. This has included extra training for support staff. This is having a positive impact.
- Teachers provide an exciting and stimulating environment for early years both in the inside and outside areas. There is a wealth of social and moral aspects to children's learning and this is a strength of the provision.
- Topics are planned from the interests of the children. Teachers use assessment and checking to plan future learning. Some curriculum areas in Reception could be given greater depth as, currently, the overwhelming focus is on English and mathematics.
- Opportunities for beginning writing are limited in the Nursery unless as a whole-class focus, although these opportunities are plentiful in Reception. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a strength across early years. There is a calm and safe atmosphere. Children are encouraged well by adults who are good role models.
- Teachers visit other settings and receive training from the other school in the MAT.

## School details

Unique reference number	141326
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10041737

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Nicola Durrant
Executive headteacher	Emma Lane
Telephone number	01268 682322
Website	<a href="http://www.leighbeck-inf.essex.sch.uk">www.leighbeck-inf.essex.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@northwickpark.essex.sch.uk">head@northwickpark.essex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Information about this school

- Leigh Beck Infant and Nursery Academy is part of the Northwick Park Multi Academy Trust. There are two schools in the MAT: Northwick Park, which became an academy in December 2014, and Leigh Beck Infant and Nursery Academy, which joined the MAT as a sponsored academy in March 2015. The school shares a site with Leigh Beck Junior School that is a sponsored academy with a different MAT.
- When its predecessor school, Leigh Beck Infant and Nursery School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to have serious weaknesses with provision that was inadequate.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion that have an education, health and care plan is average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English is an additional language is well below



average.

- This is a larger-than-average infant school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors.
- Inspectors observed pupils learning in each class. Some classes were seen jointly with a senior leader. In addition, several short visits were made to a further range of lessons. Inspectors observed pupils at break and lunchtime and before and after lessons. Inspectors observed the teaching of reading and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, two groups of pupils, a group of teachers, the chair and a member of the local governing body and the school's external adviser.
- Inspectors looked at the 73 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 41 written text comments on the same questionnaire. Forty staff questionnaires were analysed.
- The inspection team scrutinised information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, read minutes of the meetings of the governing body and scrutinised pupils' work in lessons.

## Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Estcourt	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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