

Lansdowne Primary School

Gladstone Drive, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3BH

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Outstanding leadership has ensured that improvements at Lansdowne Primary School have been rapid and sustained. Achievement has risen dramatically.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching has greatly improved to be good throughout the school. Consequently, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects.
- The governing body provides strong challenge and support for leaders. Governors use their robust knowledge of the school to monitor successfully pupils' achievements.
- The trust provides outstanding support to the school. This additional expertise has contributed significantly to leaders' ability to sustain ongoing school improvement.
- Aspirations for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that these pupils achieve well from their starting points. Additional funding is used effectively to provide the tailored support these pupils need.
- The early years setting is outstanding. Accurate assessments of children's emerging skills are used to fine-tune teaching to meet their individual needs. As a result, most children make rapid progress in Reception Year.
- Effective use of the sports premium ensures that pupils benefit from a range of additional sporting opportunities. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical activities.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are supported well, so pupils develop into successful learners.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff keep pupils safe and teach them to look after themselves effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is usually good. High expectations, linked to the school's own values, ensure that pupils are polite and respectful.
- The curriculum is outstanding. Pupils enjoy frequent activities that extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- A small minority of key stage 2 pupils do not yet uphold consistently the school's values. As a result, occasionally they do not demonstrate good attitudes to their learning.
- Despite recent significant improvements, some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not attend school regularly enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve behaviour by ensuring that:
 - Pupils, particularly those in upper key stage 2, model the school's values and expectations for behaviour consistently in all aspects of school life
 - rates of attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, continues to rise rapidly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher has provided accelerated improvement at Lansdowne. As a result, the quality of education for pupils has been transformed in recent years, and overall standards and the quality of teaching have risen sharply.
- Leaders' unremitting focus on improving pupils' outcomes has established and stabilised a palpable culture of high expectations throughout all areas of the school's work. Leaders and staff demonstrate the highest aspirations for pupils to achieve well, feel safe, and be happy.
- The trust has been instrumental in supporting the headteacher to achieve rapid improvements at Lansdowne. School leaders draw on the wide range of exceptional expertise and support made available to them from within the trust. The trust shares a strong determination to help school leaders deliver sustained improvement, and has provided a broad range of high-quality support and challenge since sponsoring the school.
- Leaders have a strong and accurate understanding of the school's overall effectiveness. They evaluate the quality of teaching to the highest standards, and focus clearly on pupils' learning and progress. Particularly, leaders prioritise appropriately how well vulnerable pupils, including the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve. As a result, pupils have been enabled to make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- Middle leaders provide particularly strong support across the school. They work in productive collaboration with trust colleagues to lead areas, such as monitoring and developing the creative curriculum, highly effectively. They support teachers and teaching assistants adeptly, which consequently enables senior leaders to focus more freely on strategic whole-school development.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. The special educational needs coordinator provides exceptionally strong support, planning expertly the appropriate provision and interventions which these pupils need. Additional excellent support is provided by the parent support adviser. Together, they ensure that this group of pupils, and others whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, receive the high-quality support and care they need to achieve well.
- The pupil premium grant is used effectively to provide strong, additional provision for disadvantaged children. These pupils' progress is tracked very carefully, and exceptional tailored support is provided when needed. Leaders' actions are firmly focused on ensuring that this group of pupils' attendance continues to improve, and that they are empowered to achieve highly.
- Leaders provide high-quality professional development for staff. They use their accurate self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness, and robust knowledge of teaching standards, to provide training that has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. For example, recent extended training on developing pupils' reading skills has resulted in a demonstrable upsurge in pupils reading for pleasure.

- Newly qualified teachers are supported to a high standard. For example, they are provided with regular support from an experienced mentor, and frequent opportunities to observe best practice from other teachers within the trust. Clearly focused training schedules ensure that newly qualified teachers gain rapidly the necessary skills to develop into effective practitioners.
- Leaders have developed an outstanding curriculum. For example, it provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to deepen their appreciation of both British values, and the school's ethos of 'friendship, compassion, truth and respect'. Leaders carefully thread these values, and further successful spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning, throughout the curriculum. Pupils achieve well, and demonstrate successfully that they are well placed to succeed in life in modern Britain.
- The sports premium is used well to provide a wealth of opportunities to engage pupils in physical activities. The sports coach is particularly inspirational, enthusing pupils to participate in additional clubs and activities at break and lunchtimes. Pupils state that 'sport at Lansdowne is brilliant' and many shared their pleasure in competing and participating in frequent matches, competitions and sporting events.
- Leaders are committed to engaging parents in the life of the school. For example, recent events such as a 'Stone-Age day' and a skipping-rope fitness session, saw large numbers of parents joining in with their children's learning. One comment, typical of many, stated: 'My child has learned a lot about values, grown in confidence and made tremendous progress since starting at Lansdowne.' A few parents stated that communication between school and home could be better. However, the large majority would recommend the school to other parents.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective.
- Governors have a strong knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They scrutinise effectively leaders' progress against key areas of the school's development plan and provide strong support to drive ongoing improvement. Similarly, they challenge senior leaders appropriately, and, as a result, help secure good achievement for all pupils.
- Governors are adept at monitoring pupils' progress. Importantly, they analyse both school and national assessment information to develop an accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness. They are particularly mindful to monitor key groups, including those pupils who are disadvantaged, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governors' checks on these pupils' outcomes are appropriately stringent, and ensure that these groups of pupils remain at the fore of leaders' work.
- Governors have effective and appropriate oversight of the school's financial management. For example, they know that the pupil premium grant and additional sports funding are spent well. Consequently, governors fulfil effectively their financial obligations.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are made when recruiting new staff. Records are detailed and accurate, and recorded appropriately on the school's single central record. They ensure that systems to protect pupils comply with the latest government guidance.
- Staff are trained well in child protection. For example, induction of new staff includes thorough safeguarding training, and further information about the school's own child protection strategies. Consequently, staff know what actions to take to keep children safe, and pupil welfare remains central to the school's work.
- Systems for staff to report concerns about pupils are robust, and leaders monitor closely any child thought to be at risk of harm. Lansdowne's highly knowledgeable safeguarding lead works diligently with other professionals in the school, the trust, and the local authority to provide high-quality care for pupils at risk.
- Site safety is managed well by leaders. They take the right actions to reduce risks, for example by deploying supervisory staff at break and lunchtimes who monitor and manage pupils' behaviour well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly, so that pupils now benefit from consistently strong practice.
- Teachers' high expectations radiate throughout the school. Pupils respond well, listen attentively, and typically work hard to produce work of a good standard. Consequently, pupils across the school make effective progress.
- Teaching ensures that lessons are matched carefully to pupils' individual level of understanding. Teachers assess accurately how well pupils are learning, and use clear explanations to tackle misconceptions effectively.
- Teaching meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Tailored support is planned carefully and delivered effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. This group of pupils receive the appropriate support they need to make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching ensures that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are challenged successfully to make rapid progress in a range of subjects. Most-able pupils show clear relish in self-selecting more difficult work that extends their knowledge and understanding. For example, in mathematics in Year 4 this group of pupils were grappling successfully to round large numbers to the nearest 1,000.
- The support provided by teaching assistants helps pupils learn well. They provide the right balance of help that ensures pupils are supported and challenged appropriately. Teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and use this skilfully to build pupils' confidence, and support them to make good progress.

- Teachers ensure that no time is wasted in teaching pupils their letters and sounds. Learning is paced appropriately, and pupils are supported effectively to learn, practise, and apply new blends and letter combinations. As a result, the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is effective and pupils learn to read well.
- Teaching helps pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils read well, and were keen to share the books they were reading in class. They spoke passionately about reading for pleasure. Teaching ensures that pupils are exposed frequently to good-quality literature, and builds successfully pupils' joy of a range texts, authors and genres.
- Teaching across the wider curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to build good skills in a range of subjects. For example, imaginative learning activities across a range of subjects in Year 2 enabled pupils to deepen their knowledge of Stone-Age man and life in prehistoric times.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils typically display good manners, caring attitudes and friendly behaviour to their peers. They cooperate well in lessons and at play, and as a result the school is calm and orderly.
- The nurture classroom provides high-quality support for vulnerable pupils. Staff are adept at providing additional care that builds pupils' self-esteem, confidence and good behaviour. As a result, these pupils receive tailored care that ensures they are best placed to access successfully learning in the mainstream classrooms.
- Pupils state that they feel safe at school. They have a secure understanding of what bullying is, and say it rarely happens at Lansdowne. They trust staff to manage it swiftly and effectively should it happen. Pupils state that teachers are very good at helping them resolve any friendship issues if they arise. As a result, most pupils and parents are confident that the school looks after children well.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, learning activities about online safety ensure that pupils know not to share personal information on social media. Pupils also demonstrate a firm ability to keep themselves safe when out in public. They know the potential dangers posed by strangers, and what actions to take if they feel threatened or at risk.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders' concerted actions have resulted in a rapid and sustained improvement in pupils' behaviour. Skilfully, leaders have ensured that pupils understand how following the school values helps them fulfil the high expectations staff have of them. As a result, the very poor behaviour of pupils that blighted the school in years past has been nearly eradicated.

- Pupils enjoy learning at Lansdowne. They listen attentively to teachers and other adults, and respond thoughtfully to questions posed in learning activities. Consequently, lessons throughout the school are typically calm and productive.
- High expectations, and the effective support in place for pupils and families, has ensured that rates of attendance have risen significantly. However, attendance figures remain stubbornly just below rates seen nationally. More needs to be achieved to ensure that pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, miss less of their learning.
- A minority of pupils, particularly in Years 5 and Year 6, do not yet demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their learning. For example, occasionally they do not fully participate in class discussions, or try their hardest to produce work of a high standard. Inspectors noted that this occurred mostly when staff did not support and challenge pupils to adhere to the school's values and expectations for behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' successful actions to eliminate a legacy of weak teaching have seen a dramatic rise in pupils' outcomes in all subjects.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in the early years setting. The proportion of pupils securing a good level of development typically exceeds the national average. The majority of children, including those who are disadvantaged, make accelerated progress from their starting points.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is similar to that seen nationally. Pupils make consistently good progress in phonics, and typically achieve well.
- By the end of key stage 1, pupils achieve well in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. Work in books demonstrates that staff have high expectations, and pupils work hard to present their work tidily and carefully. Inspectors were particularly impressed with the standard of pupils' written work, and the improvement they made over time in writing more neatly and carefully.
- Historically, some pupils did not make strong progress in a range of subjects by the end of key stage 2 because teaching was not good enough. However, current pupils in key stage 2 now make good progress from their starting points, including in English and mathematics. Pupils' books show consistently strong achievement over time across all areas of learning.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are challenged effectively and make strong progress in a range of subjects. Teaching is adapted well, particularly in English and mathematics, to ensure that learning is matched well to their higher level of understanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. These pupils receive effective additional support that is matched carefully to their needs.

- Pupils achieve well across the wider curriculum. For instance, effective teaching ensures that pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding is developed well. Pupils' work in their science books shows that they apply successful, scientific thinking to make accurate predictions.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children get off to a flying start in the early years setting. High expectations abound, and staff provide a wealth of effective learning opportunities both inside classrooms and outdoors. Children typically make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points.
- The early years coordinator provides outstanding leadership. She ensures that early assessments of children's knowledge and understanding are detailed and thorough. Wisely, the accuracy of these assessments is checked against standards from across the trust. Careful evaluation of this information is used to inform insightful targeting for children's next learning steps. As a result, children make swift progress, and those with starting points lower than those typical for children of similar ages catch up quickly.
- Staff have identified that when joining the setting some children's communication skills are often weaker than is typical. Rightly, a strong emphasis is placed on providing carefully planned activities and interventions to support successfully these pupils to improve their speech and language skills.
- Staff develop skilfully children's early reading and comprehension skills. For instance, in reading the story 'Goldilocks and the three bears', the class teacher probed children's understanding with a series of 'What happened next?' questions. Children reflected successfully on their knowledge of the book, and were able to recall chronologically the main events of the tale.
- Children's early mathematical skills are developed to a high standard in the early years. For example, in completing an 'odd or even' mathematics task, one child eloquently and accurately stated: 'Eleven is odd, because there is one left over. Twelve is even, because you can share out six each.' Children complete enthusiastically a range of activities that challenge successfully their mathematical thinking.
- Children learn how to keep themselves safe exceptionally well in the early years. Staff ensure that children learn routines quickly and effectively, such as tidying away any play equipment left on the floor, and always following adults' instructions. Children's behaviour in the early years is outstanding.
- Safeguarding is rigorous across the setting. All statutory welfare requirements are in place, and thorough risk assessments are carried out when necessary. Staff have a particularly strong understanding of the actions to take to keep children safe.
- Parents are typically positive about the early years provision. Many commented that 'children settle well', 'enjoy coming to school', and 'love their teachers'. Similarly, staff demonstrate a keen determination to build positive relationships with parents, for example by providing regular opportunities for parents to visit the setting alongside their children.

School details

Unique reference number	141548
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10036793

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Nicola Endacott
Headteacher	Annette Bevan
Telephone number	01795 423752
Website	www.lansdowne.kent.sch.uk
Email address	lansdowne@stouracademytrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Others come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is slightly above average.
- Lansdowne Primary School is part of The Stour Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning throughout the school, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their books. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of the local governing board, the director of education of The Stour Academy Trust, and with the chief executive officer of The Stour Academy Trust. The lead inspector also spoke with the school's local authority improvement partner on the telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the day and took into account 82 responses, including written comments to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also analysed 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documents was reviewed, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation document; information about pupils' achievement, attendance, behaviour and safety; governing body reports, local authority reports and trust reports.

Inspection team

Dom Cook, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Scutter	Ofsted Inspector

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