

The Laurels Primary School, Worthing

Winterbourne Way, West Durrington, Worthing, West Sussex BN13 3QH

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2019

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
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has been through a difficult time in recent years. Leaders have not ensured that pupils make good progress and that they are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. Teachers do not consistently use assessment effectively to plan work pitched at the right level.
- The governing body has not held leaders accountable for pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not yet secured good outcomes for pupils when they leave in Year 6.
- Subject leaders do not have sufficient impact in improving the quality of teaching across the school.
- The quality of teaching in early years is not consistently good and the learning environment is underdeveloped.
- Staff do not consistently expect that pupils' written work is well presented.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly for the most able. Consequently, not enough pupils are working at the higher standards by the end of key stage 2.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff say that they are proud to be a part of the school community. They have great commitment in tackling the issues identified for school improvement.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils in Year 1 have good reading skills.
- Recent work by school leaders has had a positive impact on improving pupils' attainment. They are ambitious for the school's further development.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare is good. Pupils behave well and feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes so they are consistently good or better, by:
 - ensuring that all teaching challenges pupils' learning, especially that of the most able pupils, to achieve as well as they can
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, regardless of their starting points
 - teachers having high expectations of pupils' writing abilities, handwriting and presentation.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that when subject leaders monitor teaching, learning and assessment within their areas of responsibility, they clearly focus on the challenge that teaching provides and the progress of different groups of pupils
 - governors holding leaders to account rigorously for the impact of school improvement initiatives and planning over time
 - ensuring that governors have the appropriate training to carry out their roles and statutory duties.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years provision so that children make faster progress, by:
 - providing more opportunities for children to develop their reading and writing skills in a wide range of activities
 - creating a purposeful outdoor learning environment.

An external review of governance 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

- Over time, leaders have not secured effective teaching and learning. Pupils have not made good enough rates of progress as a result. In part, this is because of all the changes to staffing. Joint observations with current senior leaders show that school judgements are accurate. There is a clear understanding of the areas that require further development, such as the early years provision and the challenge for the most able pupils.
- There have been a number of changes in leadership roles. Subject leaders have expertise and enthusiasm for their subject responsibilities. Although senior leaders have been effective in developing leadership capacity, subject leaders have not been in their posts long enough to challenge staff and hold them accountable for pupils' progress.
- Leaders successfully embed the school's values and pupils know them well. As they progress through the school, pupils learn the values of 'resilience, perseverance, respect and kindness'. These values are at the heart of the school and strongly promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' development. All pupils and staff have a nurturing care and respect for one another.
- Leaders are improving the content of the curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons in science, art, and design technology. Pupils enjoy topics that help them to understand their local community, for example, topics that help them to understand how to be safe by the seaside. The curriculum is enriched by trips to museums and places of worship. These opportunities help to widen their understanding of different beliefs and to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Pupil premium funding has been used to provide additional teaching for disadvantaged pupils. This is improving the progress for current pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders know that further work is needed to ensure that gaps in progress are closed.
- The school is strongly committed to providing equality of opportunity, fostering good relationships and discouraging discrimination. All pupils, whatever their ability, background or beliefs, have the opportunity to take part in the school's activities.
- Leaders ensure that staff morale is high. Staff feel well supported through ongoing professional training. For example, one member of staff said, 'I feel they always take care of staff when implementing changes. I love this school and its caring can-do attitude.'
- Leaders evaluate the impact of the physical education and sport premium funding to ensure that it is used effectively to engage pupils in physical activities. Sports coaching has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes through linking to the school values.
- The support from the trust has been effective. The trustees express confidence in the leadership of the school. They work closely with the headteacher to ensure that the school continues to improve.

- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and those spoken to informally say that the school is getting better. One parent said, 'The new headteacher really seems to have had a positive impact on the school since her arrival, gearing everything towards child safety, values and learning.' Nearly all of the parents who responded on Parent View would recommend the school to others.
- The school's breakfast club is well led and managed.

Governance of the school

- Governors share the determination of senior leaders to strive for the best possible outcomes for pupils. Nonetheless, they have not consistently held leaders sufficiently to account to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- Governors receive regular reports about the quality of teaching from senior leaders. However, they do not analyse pupils' progress carefully enough to challenge leaders to improve it.
- Governors have managed a difficult situation that led to them deciding to move from one trust to another. Throughout this period, there were staffing challenges, which has led to the school appointing a new headteacher and senior team.
- Governors monitor the use of additional funding, both for pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium. Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is beginning to diminish the difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, as well as other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Governors know what they need to do to improve the school and are keen to work with the trust to secure these improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school to ensure the welfare of pupils.
- Staff and governors receive up-to-date training to ensure that all requirements are met. This includes having an informed awareness of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism.
- Rigorous and robust systems are in place in all areas of safeguarding, and all staff understand them. The school sensitively handles relationships with parents and carers and families who may need extra support and advice at times. There are effective relationships with other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and that welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because they are not consistently good in all classes. Over recent years, a high turnover of staff has meant that teachers are not yet familiar with the age range that they teach. As a result, pupils' rates of progress are too variable.

- Teaching does not provide tasks that offer sufficient challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Teachers are not consistently using assessment information effectively to check closely on pupils' prior learning and to pitch work at a level that helps pupils make good progress. This is because some teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- Teachers' expectations of the pupils' written work are too variable. Some teachers are too willing to accept work that is not good enough and accept presentation that is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not always use their developing handwriting skills in their everyday written work.
- The school has taken steps to improve pupils' learning in mathematics. Training has focused staff on the use of reasoning activities in lessons. In some year groups, this is working well and evidence in books shows an increase in pupils' abilities to explain their thinking.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have established positive relationships in lessons. Consequently, pupils are encouraged to take risks in their learning. Pupils are comfortable to share their ideas and enjoy working together, for example when reading together.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Many pupils in key stage 1 learn and apply their early reading skills well to sound out unfamiliar words.
- Teaching assistants support disadvantaged pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are taught well. Teachers work closely with support staff to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All pupils have a clear sense of belonging and the importance of equality of opportunity. School leaders have developed a culture that helps nurture pupils and celebrates their achievements.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Leaders have improved safety procedures in and around the school. For example, the pupils told inspectors that the new school gates help protect them from harm.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Through assemblies and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils know how to keep safe in a range of situations. This includes when using the road and when exposed to potential hazards. Pupils also have a good appreciation of e-safety. They apply their understanding to everyday situations when these arise.
- Staff work effectively with external agencies to support pupils and families. They work relentlessly to provide pupils with a high level of care.
- All staff and parents who responded to the online survey agree that pupils are kept safe and are well looked after. One parent said, 'The children are happy and polite and

this reflects that they feel safe, secure and well cared for in their learning environment.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school, saying that it is 'amazing, fantastic and super'. They enjoy taking on additional responsibilities. For example, the prefects help during breaks and promote respect and equality within their community.
- The school manages behaviour well. Pupils understand the consequences of poor behaviour and why it is important to behave well. Pupils who spoke with inspectors have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They also said that behaviour was typically good in the school.
- While most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning through their engagement in lessons, this is less evident in the pride that they take in their work. Pupils' application of correct grammar, punctuation and spelling and the quality of their handwriting and presentation vary considerably from subject to subject.
- Attendance has improved over time and is currently in line with the national average for primary schools. Leaders work closely with parents to improve attendance, and the school is rigorous in its approach to pupils being out of school unnecessarily.
- The breakfast club provides a good, nurturing start to the day for those who attend.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because too many pupils do not achieve as well as they should. In 2018, progress at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below the national figures.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the combined expected attainment at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics remains below the national average. In Year 6, not enough pupils, particularly the most able pupils, reached the higher level because they were not consistently given sufficient challenge in lessons. This slowed down their progress.
- The most able pupils do not make as much progress as they should because the work provided for them is often too easy and provides too little challenge. Work in pupils' books shows that the most able pupils often complete the same work as other pupils and this limits how much they can achieve.
- One of the key reasons that the pupils at key stage 2 in 2018 did not make better progress was previous weak teaching. The headteacher is working to remedy this, but gaps in pupils' learning remain. While pupils made progress, it was not enough to match that made by pupils nationally.
- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points in key stage 1. In 2018, pupils' attainment was in line with the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. The school's records and inspection activities

indicate that attainment is consistently improving and the attainment of current pupils is better than last year.

- The most able pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, attaining results in line with the national averages. By the end of key stage 2, the most able pupils do not achieve the higher levels of which they are capable. This is because teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough.
- In Year 1, most pupils achieved the phonics screening check successfully. Securing the early reading skills to decode unfamiliar words gives these young readers the confidence to tackle a range of books.
- Information kept by the school about the current pupils in Year 6 indicates that they are making better progress than in the past. The work seen during the inspection confirms this. This means that the current Year 6 pupils are better prepared for secondary school.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently make good progress from their starting points. The school uses clear information about their current attainment and progress to ensure that they do not fall behind others. Where a pupil's progress is not as strong, additional support helps them catch up more quickly.
- Teachers have a clear outline for the curriculum for science, the arts, technology and humanities. Pupils write regularly around the wide range of topics they study. However, leaders know they need to check closely that the new curriculum approach secures the best possible progress across the foundation subjects.
- Pupils with SEND receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. They currently make good progress from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter early years with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age, especially in their communication and language skills. Provision in early years is not sharp enough to develop these skills to enable children to make good progress from their starting points. This means that some children are not prepared for life in Year 1.
- In 2018, by the end of Reception Year, the proportion of children that achieved a good level of development was above the national average. However, current children are making inconsistent rates of progress as a result of staffing changes.
- The leadership of early years requires improvement as it has not secured consistently good outcomes over time. School leaders recognise this and have clear plans to improve the provision. The headteacher is leading the development of early years and supports early years staff to improve their skills.
- During activities, there is insufficient focus from staff on targeting appropriate vocabulary, modelling good language and using questions and prompts to encourage children to extend their responses into simple sentences. When teachers describe the activities inside and outside the classroom, children are not clear about how they might learn and develop new skills.

- The breadth of the curriculum is appropriate. Children are eager to learn and enjoy the range of activities on offer. Children enjoy visiting the woodland to develop their understanding of the stories that they read. For example, the children were reading about 'Little Red Riding Hood' and they went to the woodland to learn more about the wolf. The children enjoyed this task, but staff missed the opportunities to extend their writing and reading skills.
- Children enjoy positive relationships with each other and with staff. This, together with their good behaviour, indicates that they feel safe.
- Disadvantaged children and children with SEND make rates of progress that are equal to, or better than, those of other children nationally because school leaders plan for each child individually.
- Parents told inspectors that they find it easy to communicate with the adults, and that their children are happy and safe.
- Safeguarding arrangements for the early years provision are effective. Risks are managed well and all staff are vigilant. Statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	143386
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10088011

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mary Mugridge
Headteacher	Charlotte Bull
Telephone number	01903 830901
Website	www.laurels.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@laurels.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Laurels Primary School converted to an academy on 1 September 2016. The school joined the New Horizons Trust, but in 2017, made the decision to change trusts, and on 1 January 2018 joined the Durrington Multi-Academy Trust.
- This is a small multi-academy trust. Beneath the board of trustees, there is a local governing body specifically focused on the Laurels Primary School. While retaining overall accountability, the board of trustees delegates many responsibilities and governance functions to the local governing body.
- Since the predecessor school was inspected, the school has converted from a first school to a primary school. Year 6 pupils were part of the school for the first time in 2018.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is in line with the average.

- There have been a considerable number of staff changes since the predecessor school was last inspected. The headteacher took up post in January 2018 and the majority of the teachers have joined the school within the last 18 months.
- Children in early years are taught in a full-time Reception class.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British, with very few who speak English as an additional language or belonging to other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils supported by funding through the pupil premium is average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 18 lessons; 10 of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at a wide range of documentation, including: safeguarding documents; the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance; and pupils' work in books.
- Discussions took place with a group of pupils, as well as informal conversations with other pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books that they enjoy.
- Meetings were held with school staff, four members of the governing body, and parents and carers.
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's staff online questionnaire and 31 responses to the pupil online questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

David Harris, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jon Hills

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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