

Inspection of a good school: Littledean Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Littledean, Cinderford, Gloucestershire GL14 3NL

Inspection dates:

9 November 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Despite leaders' high ambitions for all pupils, the curriculum is not designed well enough. Pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils enjoy school. They are polite and respectful. Pupils play and learn well together, cooperating both in the classroom and at playtimes. They care for each other. Relationships between pupils and adults are a real strength of the school. Adults know the pupils well. They support their social and emotional needs with compassion. Parents appreciate the way adults in school go 'over and above' to support their children.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. There is consistency from staff to ensure pupils keep to these expectations. This approach works particularly well for those pupils who struggle to keep their behaviour in check. Pupils report that bullying in school is rare. They are clear that should this occur, adults in school would deal with it appropriately. Pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils know and respect the values of the school. Pupils value the opportunity to take on responsibilities. They understand democracy through electing house captains. Pupils are accepting of each other's opinions. These experiences enrich pupils' learning and supports their personal development and preparation for their next stage.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have not ensured that the sequence of learning in all curriculum subjects is designed well. Pupils struggle to remember their previous learning in enough detail. As a result, pupils do not always build on their prior knowledge. Teachers do not accurately check pupils' learning to ensure they remember important knowledge.

Where leaders have created a well-considered curriculum, pupils learn well. For example, in computing, leaders have provided training, which ensures teachers have secure subject knowledge. As a result, what pupils learn has a clear sequence and structure. The curriculum deepens pupils' understanding well. Teachers check pupils' knowledge and build on prior experiences and learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons in computing. There is also a clear design in mathematics. Pupils are able to make accurate calculations. However, teachers do not always cover all important aspects of the mathematics curriculum. Learning activities that enable pupils to apply their knowledge to solve problems are not in place for all pupils.

Leaders have introduced a structured programme of phonics across the school. Pupils begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school in Reception. However, despite training, the approach to delivering phonics is too variable and lacks the consistency needed to help pupils achieve well. Although leaders have monitored the teaching of phonics, they have not acted quickly on their findings to make sure pupils' learning in phonics is effective. As a result, pupils do not always apply their learning to reading sounds and choosing the correct spelling choices. Pupils read books that contain the sounds they know. However, those pupils who struggle to read well are not always able to use their phonics knowledge in reading. Pupils do not develop fluency of reading and rely on sounding out every word. Pupils of all ages say that they enjoy reading. They read regularly at home. Pupils enjoy listening to their teachers read to them.

Leaders have created an inclusive environment. This allows pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to receive the support they need. Leaders and teachers identify suitable targets. They provide activities to help pupils meet these targets successfully. There is a particular focus on pupil's social, emotional and behavioural support. Leaders have prioritised the focus on mental health and this is pivotal to helping pupils during their time in school.

Pupils have a thorough understanding of online safety. Pupils relish the chance to be a pupil leader for roles, such as a digital leader or librarian. Some pupils have created their own 'eco carbon footprint club'. They regularly present their views on how to help the wider environment in assemblies. This enables pupils to consider their role within the wider world and the impact of pollution on the environment.

Staff are appreciative of leaders' support and approachability. Leaders are considerate of staff wellbeing. They try to limit the impact on staff workload when introducing changes that benefit pupils. Leaders provide various training opportunities to support staff development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a robust culture of vigilance to make sure all adults keep pupils safe from harm. All adults are knowledgeable and use the regular training they receive. They know it is their responsibility to follow up any actions taken regarding concerns they raise with leaders.

Early help for families is prioritised to ensure pupils receive the support to keep them safe. Leaders have positive relationships with different outside agencies, which provide additional professional support to families.

Governors ensure that safer recruitment of staff supports leaders in appointing the right adults to work in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum subjects are not well designed. In these areas, not all aspects of what pupils should learn are covered. Therefore, pupils do not build on prior knowledge as well as they could. Pupils find it difficult to remember their learning. Leaders need to ensure that learning in all subjects is covered in a well thought out and sequential manner. They should ensure all key knowledge that pupils need to know is set out clearly.
- Pupils do not learn and retain sounds that will enable them to become fluent readers. Pupils do not apply their phonics knowledge to their reading or writing. As a result, pupils do not achieve well. Leaders should ensure that they check and monitor what is being taught in phonics sessions. In addition, leaders need to make sure that teachers use assessment of pupils' phonics knowledge effectively. This will ensure all pupils increase their fluency and become successful readers.
- Leaders' systems to check and monitor the delivery of the curriculum are not carried out swiftly and with enough accuracy. As a result, leaders are unsure of the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that systems are in place to routinely check that the curriculum is being delivered effectively. This will allow leaders to make any necessary changes to the curriculum, so that pupils learn more and remember more over time.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged school to be good in May 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	115631
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10227158
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Barnsley
Head teacher	Hayley McGoldrick
Website	www.littledeanprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Leaders provide care for pupils before the start of school if required.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the leaders and have taken that into account their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, a group of staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons across the school, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors scrutinised information relating to safeguarding, behaviour and school self-evaluation.
- The lead inspector spoke to parents and carers, reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses, and reviewed the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Paul Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Dadds

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