

Inspection of Littledean Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Littledean, Cinderford, Gloucestershire GL14 3NL

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have rightly focused on developing the curriculum since the previous inspection. However, many of these improvements are in the early stages. Because of this, there are inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is designed and taught. As a result, pupils do not remember their learning well.

The school's overarching value of love is brought to life through the school's caring and inclusive environment. Pupils are polite and courteous. They feel well cared for by staff and know whom to go to for help. This helps them feel safe.

Pupils know how to behave during lessons and at social times. Overall, pupils know the school values well and how these should guide their behaviour. Where some minor disruption can occur, this is due to variability in how the curriculum is taught.

The school's work on pupils' personal development is of a high quality. Pupils reflect on religious stories and how these may have ended differently in varying circumstances. They then express a response to this activity in their own way, for example through artwork or poetry. Pupils benefit from a variety of visits, such as from authors and a Paralympian. Pupils place importance on supporting local charities, such as The Salvation Army.

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

Leaders have prioritised the essential actions needed to secure important improvements. They have evaluated the curriculum and taken decisive action. For example, they decided to adopt a new history curriculum. This is beginning to have a positive impact. For example, pupils remember recent learning on comparing primary and secondary sources. However, this work is in its infancy.

The early years curriculum is planned with carefully sequenced knowledge. The learning environment is well considered, with 'under the sea' activities. In Reception Year, children develop fine motor skills well through scissor work. In Nursery, children have sustained concentration and demonstrate a strong knowledge of numbers to 5. However, there is a disconnect between learning in the early years and the rest of the school. In some subjects, the school has not carefully sequenced the knowledge it expects pupils to learn from early years. This means pupils do not build on previous learning and remember their learning.

In reading comprehension, learning activities are carefully designed. This helps pupils consider authors' choices of words and phrases. However, in some other subjects, because the important knowledge has not been carefully sequenced from the early years, learning activities do not always precisely match the knowledge pupils need to learn. Assessment is not yet effective in identifying gaps in knowledge. As a result, misconceptions can go unaddressed, and so pupils do not remember their learning well in these subjects.

Leaders have placed importance on developing a love for reading. Pupil librarians make book recommendations in the school's newsletter and 'book buddies' share books together. The school has ensured all staff have been trained to teach phonics. This is implemented with varying success. In Nursery, children benefit from 'blend from the box' sessions to develop their communication and language. However, as children develop their understanding of reading, the teaching of phonics is less secure. A lack of consistent expectations and rigour mean that it is unclear whether pupils have grasped their learning. Although interventions to support those pupils who are behind are planned, these do not always happen. This means some pupils are far behind where they should be.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have detailed learning plans with precise and measurable targets. However, the shortcomings in curriculum design and implementation are also having an impact on pupils with SEND. Along with other pupils, these pupils do not develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum as well as they could.

The school's mental health support is highly valued by pupils. This helps them feel ready to learn. Leaders and governors are meticulous in their analysis of the rate of pupils' attendance. Although this is not yet at national levels, it is a rapidly improving picture.

The school provides a comprehensive personal development programme. This includes teaching pupils how to stay safe. Pupils develop a sense of moral purpose, for example through joining the carbon footprints group. This group encourages care for the environment. Pupils appreciate interesting experiences such as visits to the pantomime and the curling and lacrosse clubs.

The headteacher has skilfully balanced school improvement priorities with staff's well-being. Consequently, staff are proud to work here. Governors know the school's strengths and areas to develop. They are in full support of the continued work needed to secure improvement at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not identified the most important knowledge pupils need to learn, starting in the early years. This means teaching does not help pupils build their knowledge securely. The school must decide on the precise knowledge pupils need to grasp at each stage of their education so they know and remember more over time.

- Learning activities do not always build on what pupils know and can do. This is because gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and so pupils cannot remember their learning. The school should ensure that staff are supported to assess and respond to gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Oversight of how well the curriculum is being implemented across subjects is at an early stage, including in early reading. As a result, the school is not clear how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. The school should evaluate the curriculum by considering how well pupils are learning, including when learning to read, so it can make improvements where needed.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	115631
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10288150
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Barnsley
Headteacher	Hayley McGoldrick
Website	www.littledeanprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is part of the Diocese of Gloucester. At the most recent section 48 inspection of the school, carried out in October 2022, the school was judged to be good.
- The school operates its own nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, school staff, parents, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and breaktimes. In addition, the inspectors met with pupils formally and informally to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Lakmini Harkus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jack Lacey

Ofsted Inspector

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