

Inspection of a good school: Loxwood Primary School

Nicholsfield, Loxwood, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 0SR

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 January 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy. They enjoy attending this small school. They feel safe and are confident in school staff. Staff know each pupil individually, and pupils appreciate this. Pupils understand the 'Loxwood Way'. They told the inspector that kindness was the most important value in their school. Pupils model this value daily. For example, older pupils help the youngest children at lunchtimes.

Expectations, particularly for the youngest children, are not high enough. This means that children do not get off to the best start with their reading and mathematics. Behaviour at the school is safe. Classrooms are generally calm and orderly. Most pupils are committed to their learning and take pride in their achievements. A small number of pupils are too easily distracted in lessons.

Many parents and carers feel that their children are thriving at Loxwood. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) particularly appreciate the support that their children receive. However, a number of parents have become frustrated. They feel that communication from the school has not been clear. Some feel that leaders have not addressed their concerns effectively. The new headteacher is determined to re-establish effective and proactive communication with parents. Parents feel very positive about the impact the new headteacher has had in the two weeks she has been in post.

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

All staff understand the importance of reading. They know that it is vital that they help pupils to become fluent readers, and to develop their love of, and engagement with reading. There is a phonics programme in place. However, it is not being consistently implemented in every class. Children in Reception do not start learning letter-sound

correspondence early enough. Leaders have allowed expectations of the progress that children will make term by term to slip. This means that when pupils arrive in Year 1, many are not ready to start the key stage 1 curriculum. Staff are not ensuring that children practise their reading from books that match their phonics knowledge frequently or consistently enough. Leaders have not ensured that books that match pupils' phonics knowledge are available in every class. Not all staff have the expertise they need to ensure that all pupils, including those who struggle with reading or those with SEND, learn to read at an age-appropriate level.

The school's curriculum for mathematics carefully sequences knowledge, concepts and procedures for pupils in Year 1 to Year 6. Assessment is used effectively in mathematics. Opportunities to revise prior learning, particularly after the pandemic, have been considered carefully. Leaders have supported teachers to adapt the curriculum to ensure that learning from previous years is secured. However, the curriculum is not taught consistently and effectively in all classes. A separate mathematics curriculum is in place for Reception. This curriculum has not been designed to carefully prepare children for key stage 1.

The foundation subjects are taught in a two-year cycle, following the national curriculum. Leaders have carefully considered the topics that pupils will study over time, and the experiences that they want pupils to have before the end of primary school. The specific knowledge that pupils need to learn within each subject has not been planned coherently. This means that pupils sometimes encounter learning that they do not have enough prior knowledge of to fully understand. Leaders know that their next step is to plan and sequence the curriculum for each subject in a coherent way so that new knowledge and skills that pupils learn deliberately build on what has been taught before. This will help teachers to focus on core knowledge within each subject, so that all pupils, including those with SEND, can learn more and achieve good results. A lack of clear curriculum thinking is also evident in early years.

Leaders are proud of the ways in which the curriculum at Loxwood extends beyond the academic. Pupils enjoy the range of sporting activities on offer. They appreciate that leaders focus on equal opportunities by ensuring, for example, that as many girls as boys get the chance to compete at tag rugby. Pupils have the chance to take on a range of roles, such as being a member of the school council. Pupils told the inspector that these roles had helped them to build their confidence, as well as their sense of pride in their school. The new headteacher has taken rapid action to address behaviour in the school, and the impact of her actions can already be seen. There is a safe and calm learning environment.

Governors are highly committed to the school. They have a clear vision. They want the school to sit at the heart of the community and provide all pupils with an excellent quality of education. Many are new to their role or took up post during the pandemic. This, alongside the school being at a point of transition in leadership, has made some aspects of governance more challenging. Governors, and the school community more widely, are excited about the future of Loxwood Primary School. They feel that the new headteacher is giving the school the fresh start that it needs to move forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Staff have been trained so that they can identify those pupils who may need early help and who may be at risk. They know how to bring their concerns to the attention of those responsible for safeguarding. Safeguarding leaders do take the action they need to take to keep pupils safe. Leaders are ensuring that pupils learn about consent and healthy relationships. Pupils knew whom they would talk to at school about any worries they had. They felt confident that school staff would help them. Pupils whom the inspector spoke to said that they felt safe. They could tell the inspector what they had learned about staying safe online and in their day-to-day lives.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The phonics programme introduced in 2016 has not been implemented effectively. Staff need additional training to ensure that they have the expertise they need to support all children to learn to read. Letter–sound correspondence needs to be taught from the start of Reception. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the right resources so that books match sounds, especially for the lowest attaining readers. To ensure that weaker readers get off to a good start with their reading, leaders need to ensure that staff prioritise very regular reading with these pupils so that they get to apply their phonics knowledge in the context of reading a book that is precisely matched to the sounds they have learned.
- The mathematics curriculum is currently implemented more effectively in some year groups than in others. The curriculum does not build sequentially from Reception because leaders in Reception have developed their own mathematics curriculum. This means that there is a lack of alignment between what children learn in Reception and what they go on to learn in Year 1. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum for mathematics in Reception is aligned with the curriculum for Years 1 to 6. This will ensure that learning is not repeated, and children have all of the mathematical knowledge and understanding they need to be ready to study the Year 1 mathematics curriculum. Leaders need to train all staff so that leaders' expectations in terms of pedagogy and lesson structure are clear and all staff have the expertise to implement the mathematics curriculum effectively.
- Leaders want to give all pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. However, in some foundation subjects, the curriculums have not been coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning. Leaders need to map out the curriculum in each subject in a coherent way so that pupils' knowledge and understanding are systematically developed over time.
- Leaders have redeveloped the early years curriculum in accordance with the new framework. Leaders in early years recognise the importance of communication and

language, and know that this underpins all seven areas of learning. Leaders recognise the important role of high-quality texts in early years. However, leaders in early years have not developed their curriculum thinking across all seven areas of learning cohesively and systemically. Leaders need to ensure that they develop a coherent curriculum that sequences learning across the seven areas so that all children, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

- The school's behaviour policy does not set out clearly enough the expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct, nor how staff need to respond to behaviour. While pupils do listen to adults in the school, they are not always attentive to their learning, and small numbers of pupils demonstrate some silly behaviour, especially during unstructured time. Staff do not always recognise such low-level behaviour or address it quickly. Leaders need to redevelop the school's approach to behaviour management so that expectations are clear and consistent, and when pupils do not meet expectations, staff know exactly what to do.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2011.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	125845
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10207090
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Wayne Schofield
Headteacher	Fiona Dowley
Website	www.loxwoodschoo.com
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher is currently appointed on an interim basis. She took up post in January 2022, two weeks prior to the inspection.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.
- The chair of governors was elected in December 2019. The majority of governors are new to their role.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. The inspector met with representatives of the governing board, including the chair of governors. The inspector spoke with the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. For the early reading deep dive, the inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum for personal, social and health education.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector also discussed safeguarding with governors and the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school, school improvement plans, behaviour records, minutes of recent meetings of the governing body, and a sample of support plans for pupils with SEND, including education, health and care plans.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe at school.
- The inspector reviewed 22 responses to the staff survey, 57 responses to the pupil survey and 73 responses to the parent survey.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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