

Loughton School

Bradwell Road, Loughton, Milton Keynes, MK58DN

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Since the previous inspection, rates of progress across the year groups have increased so that pupils now reach above average standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- The school has good systems for keeping a close eye on how well all pupils are doing. Pupils needing additional support are quickly identified and helped to stay on track to reach their targets.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium benefit from good support. They therefore make good progress.
- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. Teaching subjects through interesting topics and themes motivates pupils to learn with enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- Strong leadership, including that of the governing body, has been central to maintaining and building on the school's good performance since the previous inspection. Thorough processes of self-evaluation and development planning have resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning and to all aspects of school life.
- Parents who expressed an opinion are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. Almost all would recommend the school to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and a small proportion requires improvement.
- Some teachers do not always plan activities that are suitable for every pupil's needs. Consequently, not all pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- When marking pupils' work, teachers frequently give pupils useful guidance on how to improve. However, they do not always ensure that pupils then act on their comments quickly enough and, therefore, they do not always learn from their mistakes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons taught by 24 teachers. In addition, inspectors observed the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent). Many of these observations were made jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteachers of the school.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, parents and carers, staff, including senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at school documentation, including teachers’ planning, the school’s self-evaluation and development plans, assessment information, monitoring files, governing body minutes, safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their enjoyment of books.
- Inspectors considered the 49 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 55 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela Kirk

Additional Inspector

Simon Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a well-above-average-sized junior school.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision (lessons that take place regularly away from school).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding and pupils' progress increases by:
 - ensuring that teachers always plan a range of activities that are suitable for every pupil's needs
 - ensuring that teachers give pupils regular opportunities to respond to the comments they write when they mark pupils' work, so that pupils take every opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils demonstrate curiosity and great interest in their work. They enjoy sharing ideas and working together to complete tasks. Pupils gain knowledge, understanding and skills quickly in a wide range of subjects.
- Progress for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good. However, not enough pupils make outstanding progress because the work set is not always exactly matched to ensure that all pupils are fully challenged to reach the highest possible standards of which each is capable.
- Standards have risen steadily since the previous inspection. Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is above average. In the 2012 tests, it was significantly above average at the higher levels.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading a great deal. Reading activities are well organised to meet the needs of the full range of abilities. Pupils value the opportunities to read in lessons each day and read regularly to an adult. Home reading is actively encouraged. As a result, pupils make good progress in their reading and are well equipped to choose books to suit their interests.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to that of their peers because they benefit from well-managed and carefully tailored support.
- The funding for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is spent effectively. It has enabled the school to provide pupils with additional one-to-one and small group support. Consequently, any gaps are narrowing between the performance of those who do and do not receive the funding. For example, in the 2012 Year 6 tests, the proportions reaching the expected level in English narrowed by 5%. There still remain some gaps in attainment for a few pupils, especially in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' dedication and enthusiasm for their subjects are infectious and motivate pupils to enjoy their learning a great deal. Pupils always try their best and work very well together in pairs and groups.
- Pupils are well involved in their own learning, especially in identifying what they would like to find out. They have good opportunities to work with their teachers and other adults to discuss and explore their interests. For example, Year 3 pupils have written questions they would like answered on the current topic of soil and rocks. In one lesson seen, every pupil was engaged in finding information on various rock types through research using the internet on electronic tablets.
- Classrooms are attractive and displays celebrate pupils' achievements across different curriculum areas, providing prompts to guide learning and recording pupils' current 'learning journeys'.
- Teachers check their pupils' progress to identify those who are at risk of falling behind so that support can be given. Teachers and their assistants work well together to secure pupils' good learning.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge leads to lively discussions with pupils and incisive questions to develop pupils' skills and knowledge.
- Teachers plan exciting activities across subjects that also help pupils develop and practise their writing and mathematical skills. For example, Year 5 pupils are learning about healthy living. In one lesson seen, pupils had measured their heart rates during various stages of exercise and used this information to plot a graph. In another lesson, pupils were developing their persuasive writing skills by writing to the headteacher asking for a daily sports lesson because of the health benefits it would bring. However, planning does not always provide for the precise needs of each individual.
- In the outstanding lessons, teachers plan work to match all abilities to ensure that all pupils are

challenged to achieve their very best. Progress slows in the few lessons where planning for learning for pupils of different abilities is not as effective as it should be. This accounts for the slightly weaker progress some pupils make, mostly in mathematics.

- Teachers frequently mark pupils' work and give pupils written and oral feedback on what they have done well and what needs to be improved. They do not, however, always ensure that pupils act on their comments quickly enough so that they can learn from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Adults model excellent relationships and, as a result, pupils learn to behave with great courtesy and respect to all.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically to teachers' high expectations by displaying outstanding attitudes to learning. This makes a very strong contribution to their successful learning. They take great pride in their work and are strongly motivated to do their best.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are excited to take responsibilities for many aspects of school life, such as being school councillors, eco warriors, sports and playground leaders.
- Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying, including prejudicial behaviours. On the odd occasion that a behavioural incident occurs, the adults in the school manage it very well. For instance, in such cases, pupils discuss their inappropriate behaviour, its impact on them and others and subsequently follow this up in a written reflection. This is highly effective in ensuring pupils take responsibility for their own actions and it results in improved behaviour.
- Parents and pupils say they feel very safe in school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, including all aspects associated with using the internet safely. This understanding was reinforced recently with the e-safety poster competition in which all pupils participated and the recent appointment of pupil lead learners in information and communication technology (ICT) I, with a representative from each class.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils arrive punctually to school and to their lessons after the breaks.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and the governing body have established well-thought-out procedures for checking all aspects of the school's work. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This helps them to identify priorities for improvement. Resulting actions are monitored carefully to determine if they are successfully bringing about required improvements.
- Since the previous inspection, attainment has risen, outstanding behaviour has been consolidated and a higher proportion of teaching is outstanding, although a few inconsistencies remain. Leaders have correctly prioritised the need to narrow further the attainment gap and to ensure that all teaching is at least good, with even more that is outstanding.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make. They meet regularly with leaders to review how every pupil in each class is progressing in their learning. These meetings and other checking processes are used well to identify and follow up on the impact of the support provided for pupils identified as having special educational needs and those at risk of falling behind in their learning.
- Lesson observations are undertaken regularly. Teachers are given areas for further development and are supported to improve through training and mentoring by middle and senior leaders.
- The good curriculum is enriched through themed topics and related visits, for instance to museums, art galleries and the annual Year 6 trip to France. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the plentiful opportunities to learn art, music, and a wide range of sports. With these and other opportunities, such as the choir's regular public performances, theatrical productions, and the termly newsletter written and edited by the pupils, the school ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Parent representatives from each class have the opportunity

to share their views termly with school leaders. The school keeps parents well informed of events, their children's progress and also of how to help their children with work at home.

■ The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The governing body ensures that arrangements for safeguarding are robust and effective. Analysis of data, together with detailed information from the headteacher, ensures governors are well informed about the quality of teaching, overall pupils' progress and how the school's performance compares to similar junior schools. Governors visit the school regularly to monitor all aspects of its work. They support and challenge leaders well in order to ensure continued improvement. Governors usually check spending priorities to ensure value for money. They know that the pupil premium funding is targeted to raise achievement through funding personal development opportunities and additional academic tuition. They have not, however, analysed with precision the exact difference it has made to the achievements of those pupils supported by the additional funding. Governors are informed of the outcomes of the school's annual appraisal procedures and make sure that only successful teachers are rewarded. Experienced governors mentor new members of the governing body and all governors undertake regular training to maintain their effectiveness.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110390
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	403114

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	476
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Duggan
Headteacher	Ken Behrens
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
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