

Lonesome Primary School

Grove Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1SD

Inspection dates 20–21 October 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have dealt rigorously with areas identified as in need of improvement at the last inspection. Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this has led to considerable improvement in pupils' progress and attainment in writing.
- Leaders are relentless in their quest to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. They check teaching very carefully so they can provide teachers with sharply targeted individual support and guidance.
- The governing body has become more effective in discharging its duties by restructuring after a review of its performance. Governors are now more challenging and share in planning actions for improvement and checking their impact.
- Leaders and governors are successful in helping pupils meet the school's core values as encapsulated in 'The Lonesome Charter', particularly to respect others, listen to each other and care for the world.
- More effective teaching in the early years has led to improvements in children's progress since the last inspection, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum brings richness and breadth to pupils' learning. It is designed so that it not only meets their needs and interests but also involves them in planning topic themes.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and keen to talk about their achievements and the part they play in the school. They conduct themselves well and with great consideration for others.
- Staff are vigilant in ensuring that they safeguard the well-being of all pupils. This includes teaching pupils how to take responsibility for looking after themselves.
- Leaders identify swiftly where additional support is needed to help pupils catch up if they are in danger of not reaching expectations for their age.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers spot quickly enough whether pupils are learning successfully in lessons so they can adapt their teaching or adjust tasks they set.
- Leaders have not provided all teachers with sufficient training. Some teachers do not use consistent approaches to deepen pupils' understanding in mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers evaluate more sharply the progress and learning of pupils, so they can react and adjust their teaching to meet learning needs more speedily.
- Leaders should provide training, guidance and support so that all teachers use effective approaches that enable pupils to develop mastery of mathematical concepts more securely.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and school leaders have created a strong ethos throughout the school based on respect and high expectations. Pupils appreciate that their teachers want the best for them and so strive to meet their expectations for their work and behaviour.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths, the improvements they have secured and what needs to be done further to meet their ambitions and goals. Action taken since the school's last inspection has resulted in considerable improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in writing.
- Leaders, including the new team of phase group leaders, work closely with staff to motivate and support them to improve their teaching. Each teacher's performance is linked tightly to individual targets, progress towards which is checked regularly in order to spot where further training is needed. Leaders have trained teachers well on how to improve pupils' writing, but insufficient has been provided for them to develop the expertise to teach pupils how to master mathematical concepts securely.
- The headteacher ensures that staff do their utmost to enable each pupil to be successful. For those pupils who qualify, additional funding such as the pupil premium is used effectively to increase the progress and close attainment gaps with other pupils nationally.
- The curriculum focuses sharply on developing core skills and also gives a firm base for pupils' personal development. Half-termly topic themes are studied by the whole school but followed in different ways by each year group. They then exhibit this work for parents. The theme 'Who are we?' led to Year 4 pupils posing the question and planning their study of 'What makes us human?'
- The wide range of trips and extra-curricular activities extend pupils' experiences and learning considerably. Additional funding is used well to increase the profile of sport. Pupils now experience team competition against other schools and within school. Teachers have benefited from working alongside specialists in order to develop their confidence and teaching skills.
- Staff take every opportunity to build and develop an understanding of key values into pupils' daily lives. The school is working towards becoming a UNICEF 'Rights Respecting School'. This has supported pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as their understanding of what it is to be British. Pupils are knowledgeable about democracy. They realise the importance of the rule of law and are understanding of others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have become more thorough in discharging their duties since the last inspection. They have benefited from local authority advice and support from the governing body of a highly effective school. They now check the school's performance carefully and question the headteacher closely. Focused visits and the close interrogation of assessment information enable governors to base their questions on first-hand evidence. They are now fully involved in identifying priorities for action and checking that they make a difference to pupils. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching, how individual support for teachers has secured improvements and where more is needed. Governors have become much more focused on establishing the impact of their spending decisions. This has included a detailed review of what difference the pupil premium spending is having on the achievement of those pupils who are in receipt of this funding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are trained to carry out rigorous strategies to protect pupils. The school provides guidance for parents and training for pupils to help them reduce risks such as when using the internet or on local roads. Staff check the whereabouts of pupils quickly when they are absent or have moved to another school to ensure that they are not at risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Typically, teachers have high expectations of pupils as shown by the way they make them think deeply through the questions they pose. They manage behaviour well so that classrooms are calm and pupils can learn free from disturbances. Teachers give explanations of new ideas clearly. They make sure that support staff are briefed to help pupils with learning or language difficulties to participate fully.
- Teachers use their assessment of learning in a lesson, when planning what should happen in the next lesson, with greater accuracy. This has been the outcome of training provided by senior leaders.

However, not all teachers and support staff respond quickly enough to learning taking place within a lesson in order to adapt and reshape tasks. This can lead to some pupils repeating skills already mastered, while others struggle with misconceptions.

- Initial reading skills are taught well with some examples of particularly effective teaching by support staff to small groups, helping pupils to reinforce their learning of new letter sounds. Teachers also provide interesting contexts and use well-chosen texts to stimulate pupils' writing, and teach key skills of sentence structure and spelling accuracy well.
- Basic calculation skills are taught well, often with practical equipment available to help reinforce methods for pupils who find new ideas difficult. Some teachers have become skilled at getting pupils to think mathematically and challenge the more-able pupils to extend their reasoning. This was seen to good effect when a group of more-able pupils in Year 4 had to solve a tricky puzzle linked to their learning about money addition. However, this is not consistently the case. Some teachers do not provide pupils with activities that enable them to understand and think about the mathematics they are learning.
- Teachers check carefully that pupils follow up the guidance they provide when marking work. The school marking policy is followed closely and supports learning well. Pupils are able to see where they have made mistakes and how they can be corrected, or how to make their writing more interesting and of a higher quality.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and self-assured. They understand what it takes to be successful. This is shown by their effort and response to their teachers' suggestions of how to improve their work.
- Members of the school council take their responsibilities maturely. A sophisticated and reasoned discussion led to thoughtfully taken decisions about how to distribute funds pupils had raised for various charities.
- Pupils know the importance of treating others and the environment with respect and being responsible for their actions. They try hard to fulfil the school's values. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'You have to treat everyone with respect when you work as a team.'
- Bullying is very rare and name calling tackled quickly. Pupils know that if they have a problem they should go to an adult who will sort it out.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move around the school sensibly, helping to make it a purposeful and orderly environment. Pupils are very welcoming, friendly and polite. They happily befriend newly arrived pupils and help them to settle in as quickly as possible.
- Resilience and perseverance are key features of the way pupils approach learning. They work hard in lessons. The productive way they work together sharing ideas contributes significantly to their good learning. Disruptions to lessons are very rare, although a small number of pupils become inattentive when activities are not engaging or they repeat work they have already mastered.
- Pupils understand the school's expectations for their attendance and the systems for reducing absence. Attendance has improved and there has been a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. This is because of the detailed and thorough way that the procedures are carried out, and the close working with parents has led to an improvement in attendance and a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Pupils make good progress in writing across the school. They apply their understanding of grammar and use interesting vocabulary to make their writing more engaging to the reader. Pupils develop their writing skills well in projects, particularly when exhibiting their work each half term for their parents.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They learn to calculate accurately using formal methods securely and recall knowledge quickly. However, they are less secure at applying these skills to solving problems and deepening their understanding and mastery of mathematics.

- Pupils make good progress in reading. Their basic understanding of letters and sounds has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy reading, particularly where texts are linked to the topic being studied. Their comprehension skills develop well and many become skilled at inferring meaning from what they are reading.
- There are no patterns to any differences in the attainment of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Any gaps between groups are specific to a particular class group. The gaps are identified quickly and reduced. The language needs of pupils new to speaking English are met well, so their attainment is at least on a par with others once they have achieved fluency.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similarly good progress to others in their classes. This has resulted in attainment gaps between them and other pupils nationally narrowing considerably. The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school are very slight.
- Programmes to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are carefully planned, based on an accurate assessment of individual needs. This additional help means that they make good progress towards their targets, particularly those with speech and language needs.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because teachers generally make sure that their thinking is extended and deepened. They are given work that is more challenging than for others and they rise to the high expectations of their teachers.
- Year 6 test results have been following a rising trend since the school's last inspection, particularly in writing. While staffing difficulties in Year 6 led to a fall in test results for mathematics in 2015, this was not reflected across the school where progress in mathematics was good. Increased numbers of pupils reach and exceed progress expected for their age across all year groups. This prepares them well for secondary school.
- Year 2 attainment has also been steadily rising since the last inspection and was broadly average in 2015. This represented good and much-improved progress at Key Stage 1, given that this group left Reception with well below average attainment.

Early years provision

is good

- Strong and effective leadership has led to improvements in teaching and classroom organisation since the last inspection. Through a recent joint review of the early years, leaders and governors have a very clear picture of the impact of action taken and what is needed to bring about further improvements. Teaching is now good across the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of learning and particularly in their personal and social development.
- Children are much better prepared for learning in Year 1 than previously because of their more rapid progress in literacy and mathematics. Their attainment by the end of Reception has risen considerably and was broadly similar to the national average in 2015.
- Teachers use their ongoing assessment of each child to ensure teaching and activities available enable them to take the identified next steps in their learning. This is particularly so in literacy and numeracy where more effective direct teaching is helping children secure these key skills more quickly.
- A significant number of children have limited speaking skills on entry and many are new to speaking English. Adults focus on developing children's language, although they sometimes do not react quickly enough to learning taking place in front of them by expecting children to speak in full sentences.
- Children behave well and work happily because they feel safe and secure. They settle quickly into a nurturing and caring environment across all classes. They learn quickly how to work together and share resources. Many can be seen developing their own lines of enquiry, although some new arrivals gravitate towards adults as they have yet to develop confidence to work by themselves.

School details

Unique reference number	102636
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10005771

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	424
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Smith
Headteacher	Vanessa Conlan
Telephone number	020 8648 1722
Website	www.lonesomeprimary.co.uk
Email address	lonesome@lonesome.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2013

Information about this school

- This school is well above average in size, compared with other primary schools.
- Three quarters of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. This figure is well above average.
- Half the pupils speak English as an additional language. This figure is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by funding through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave part-way through their primary education is higher than in the majority of primary schools.
- The Nursery caters for 104 children on a part-time basis. Children are admitted to the Nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday. There were 45 children on roll at the time of the inspection. Children attend the two Reception classes full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 19 lessons. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors to 13 of these. They looked at work in pupils' books from the previous and current academic years.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and written contributions from two parents. They also met informally with parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Cartlidge	Ofsted Inspector
Hazel Burnie	Ofsted Inspector

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