

Liss Junior School

Hillbrow Road, Liss, Hampshire GU33 7LQ

Inspection dates

1–2 December 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' very recent action to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes has not yet resulted in significant improvement.
- Teaching is not consistently good, which prevents pupils from making rapid progress. Teachers do not match their planning closely enough to what they know about pupils' prior learning.
- Feedback and assessment during lessons is not precise enough to move learning on quickly or address pupils' misconceptions when they arise. Consequently, pupils are not challenged sufficiently and learning loses pace.
- Some teaching is uninspiring, leading to pupils losing focus and disengaging from their learning. As a result, pupils make less progress than they should.
- In 2016, pupils in Year 6 did not make enough progress or achieve as well as they should have. For pupils currently in the school, outcomes and progress are not improving quickly or consistently.
- Overall, boys do not achieve as well as girls. Pupils with low starting points do not consistently make accelerated progress to catch up with their peers.

The school has the following strengths

- Since she arrived in September 2016, the new headteacher's vision and drive have invigorated the school's work. She has secured the confidence of parents and united staff in their commitment to raise standards. Some clear improvement is already evident, though not yet well developed.
- Pupils and parents report that recent changes to leadership have raised expectations for behaviour. Pupils conduct themselves well and are supportive of each other.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff use clear systems to keep pupils safe and make sure they are well cared for.
- Pupils attend school regularly, with absence rates below the national average. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attend particularly well.
- The resource base provides effectively for the pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. As a result, these pupils thrive and make very good progress.
- Pupils are prepared well for the future. The wider curriculum enriches their learning and develops their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. They know how to be a good citizen in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good, by:
 - using assessment information to ensure that teaching builds learning rapidly from individual pupils' starting points
 - giving pupils more precise feedback to ensure that misconceptions are addressed promptly and to help them move on more quickly.
- Improve outcomes for pupils, so that:
 - pupils in the main school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make accelerated progress and catch up with their peers nationally
 - disadvantaged pupils in all year groups consistently make better progress so that they achieve as well as other pupils nationally
 - boys make better progress and achieve consistently in line with expectations for their age.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads with passion and determination which has energised the work of the school. Since being appointed, she has acted swiftly to address key barriers to success. Pupils, staff and parents recognise the green shoots of improvement that are resulting.
- Staff are committed to providing the best possible experience for the pupils in their care. They work well together as a team and are keen to develop their skills and expertise. They value the relevant and helpful support that leaders give them in their roles.
- Staff receive regular and effective feedback about their work, which helps them to improve. Leaders support their development through frequent training and opportunities to see good teaching and learning in practice. Staff use these recent experiences effectively to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Pupils are prepared well for their future learning by a varied and enriched curriculum. Staff work together to develop topics further, so that they meet increasingly the needs of pupils. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is enhanced creatively through outside learning and inspiring links to a school in Uganda.
- Leaders use additional PE and sports funding effectively to enhance the curriculum and encourage pupils to lead active and healthy lives. Specialist teaching is coupled with valuable opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular sporting events. Leaders plan carefully how this money is spent and monitor regularly to check that it is making a positive difference to pupils' health and well-being.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They learn about democracy, tolerance and liberty, and integrate these skills and attributes readily into the life of the school. The seamless inclusion of pupils who attend the resource base into mainstream lessons shows how effectively this is achieved.
- Leaders provide effectively for pupils who attend the special educational needs resource base. Staff care for these pupils extremely well, understanding and meeting their needs. Pupils are challenged to reach high expectations for learning and progress.
- Teachers are held increasingly to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Leaders review forensically the progress that pupils are making from their individual starting points and have clear expectations for how teachers address underperformance.
- In the past, leaders have not used pupil premium funding effectively. The headteacher has swiftly evaluated the difference this money is making to disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and progress, and subsequently redirected its use. It is now being used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress.

Governance of the school

- Governors use their experience and expertise to increasingly support and challenge school leaders. They know the school well, and recognise the work that needs to be done to improve it further.

- Governors are confident in leaders' capacity to bring about the necessary change that will strengthen teaching and pupils' outcomes. They check their understanding of key issues through careful questioning, and are less accepting of explanations for underperformance than they have been in the past. This enables them to hold leaders increasingly to account.
- Governors understand their statutory obligations and undertake them meticulously. They evaluate their own practice carefully and undertake relevant training to improve their effectiveness. They have appropriate systems in place to evaluate leaders' judgements about teachers' performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff work closely with parents, carers and professionals beyond the school to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils report that they feel safe in school, and parents support this view.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They carry out diligent checks on any adults coming into school and keep accurate records of recruitment checks for staff. They liaise regularly with staff at Robins Oak behaviour support centre, to ensure that any pupils placed there are safe and accounted for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching not consistently good across the school. As a result, pupils do not make rapid progress over time.
- Where teaching is less effective, it is not closely matched to individual pupils' starting points. Learning activities lack pace and challenge, and pupils lose interest in their work. Consequently, their progress is limited.
- Teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding during lessons. As a result, misconceptions are not identified or challenged quickly enough. Consequently, pupils who need to catch up with their peers do not receive extra help quickly enough to accelerate their progress.
- Leaders interrogate individual pupil performance carefully, using it to hold teachers to account about progress from starting points. Leaders' systems for tracking the progress of groups of pupils are less well developed and this prevents them from planning extra help as strategically as they could.
- Pupils read with fluency appropriate to their age, but do not always understand what they are reading. Leaders have recently addressed this by introducing guided reading opportunities, but it is too early to see the impact of this action.
- Teachers share their planning effectively with other adults, who support pupils in lessons by quietly checking and redirecting their learning.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and use their strong subject knowledge to plan appropriate learning activities. They use questioning skilfully to probe and deepen pupils' understanding, then move the learning on rapidly.

- Pupils who attend the resource base make extremely good progress, because teaching is closely matched to their individual needs. Adults have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning, and review their progress constantly, so that next steps are targeted carefully.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents report a renewed focus on learning over the course of the autumn term, which is motivating their children to work hard. The newly introduced code of conduct holds pupils to account so that they take responsibility for their own learning. One parent described their children as coming home 'buzzing about what they're learning'.
- Pupils understand clearly their roles within the school community. They relish the wide range of opportunities for them to take on responsibilities, such as being 'peer mentors' and 'playground pals' or participating in school plays. This helps them to develop their social and communication skills.
- Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Leaders and teachers use assembly time effectively to complement the taught curriculum with clear messages about stranger danger and road safety, for example. Cross-curricular topics at the start of each term give pupils the opportunity to contribute ideas to make the school better.
- Most pupils report that bullying happens rarely. When it does, they are confident that they can tell a teacher who will help sort it out, although sometimes pupils feel that this takes longer than they would like it to.
- Staff work hard to meet the welfare needs of pupils. This is most evident for pupils who work in the resource base, who are exceptionally well cared for. Where appropriate, leaders work closely with families to arrange alternative provision that best meets the needs of individual pupils, who flourish as a result.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Attendance figures are consistently high, especially for pupils who have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. Pupils in alternative provision attend well and school leaders check their attendance regularly.
- School records reflect the improved behaviour that pupils and parents describe and the good behaviour evident during the inspection. Leaders focus on rewarding positive behaviour, and pupils meet their high expectations.
- Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and the adults in school. They mostly manage themselves well within their open-plan learning environment. Some can become distracted when teaching does not capture their interest sufficiently.
- The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent from school has increased slightly compared with previous years. Leaders are working to address this issue by working

closely with the relevant pupils and their families to provide effective support. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance carefully and act promptly to address any concerns they have.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Although pupils are generally making expected progress, this is not helping those with low starting points to catch up with their peers.
- Pupils who left the school in the summer of 2016 made poor progress overall, especially in writing. The proportion of pupils who achieved age related expectations in writing and mathematics was below the national average. Middle ability disadvantaged pupils and low ability boys made much less progress than they should have.
- The most able pupils are achieving in line with expectations but are not making the rapid progress they are capable of, because teaching does not challenge them sufficiently.
- Pupils in mainstream classes who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the rapid progress evident for those supported in the resource base. The special educational needs co-ordinator is supporting teachers in planning to meet these pupils' needs more effectively, but it is too early to see the improvement it is making to these pupils' achievements.
- Overall, boys do not achieve as well as girls. Teachers have adapted the curriculum to increase engagement, introducing topics to stimulate their interest. As yet, this has not significantly diminished the differences in achievement between boys and girls.
- Year 6 performance information and work suggests more pupils are on track to meet age-related expectations by the end of the year than happened last year. This is also the case for Years 3 and 4 in writing and Year 4 in mathematics, showing that standards are improving.
- Historically, disadvantaged pupils achieved in line with their peers, but this was not the case in 2016. Pupil premium funding has been redirected and is now making a positive difference, with disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 performing in line with their peers. There is further work to do to help those in lower years to develop strong and consistent achievement.
- Pupils in the resource base make strong progress from their individual and very low starting points. The closely targeted teaching they receive is accelerating their progress and helping them to catch up with their peers.

School details

Unique reference number	115925
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10000640

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Pritchard
Headteacher	Jilly Myers
Telephone number	01730 892292
Website	www.lissjunior.hants.sch.uk
Email address	jmyers@lissjunior.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 September 2011

Information about this school

- Liss Junior School is a broadly average-sized junior school, with two classes in each year group. It has a special educational needs resource base, which provides 11 places for junior school aged pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- The school has a higher than typical percentage of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs. The percentage who are eligible for special educational needs support overall is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English or who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is approximately half the national average.
- The headteacher who was in post at the time of the previous inspection retired in July 2016. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2016. One assistant headteacher took up her post in January 2016, overseeing provision for pupils who

have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Another assistant headteacher is currently on maternity leave.

- Robins Oak Centre is used to help a small number of pupils who need an alternative to mainstream provision.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's floor standards for what pupils are expected to achieve in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all the classes, spoke to a range of pupils and looked through their work. Some of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher. An inspector listened to some pupils reading.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and groups of staff, pupils and governors. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority and carried out a work scrutiny with the English and mathematics leaders.
- The lead inspector visited the resource base for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She met the pupils, looked at their work and talked to the special educational needs co-ordinator about her work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, governor minutes, pupil performance information, behaviour and attendance records, the school website and various policies. Inspectors considered the school's safeguarding procedures and records of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors took into account 62 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, 72 responses to the pupil survey and 20 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents on the playground at the start of the inspection and to pupils at playtime.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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