

Liss Infant School

Hillbrow Road, Liss, Hampshire GU33 7LQ

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have not been good enough in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet good. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress in their learning to help them catch up with other pupils nationally.
- The headteacher has had too much to do alone. Consequently, standards have not risen quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has provided resilient and resolute leadership at a time of change and challenge. She has an unfaltering focus on doing what is right for her pupils and families.
- The headteacher's evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is completely accurate. The plans for improvement are appropriate and detailed.
- Teachers with leadership roles are now having an impact on raising standards and improving teaching.
- Governors know the school well. They support and challenge the headteacher well and check the improvements being made.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective.
- Parents are positive about the school and appreciate the caring ethos and friendly, professional staff.
- Children make a good start to school in the early years. They enjoy learning both in the classroom and outside.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities around the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn and play with their friends. As a result attendance is above average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve teaching so that all groups of pupils make at least good progress over time, by:
 - always having the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - regularly checking on progress during lessons and adapting tasks where necessary
 - deploying teaching assistants effectively
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to problem-solve and reason in mathematics
 - organising opportunities for teachers to observe highly effective practice in other schools.
- The governing body should implement plans to strengthen the leadership team without delay.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher knows every pupil and their family well. She strives to do the very best for everyone. Parents appreciate her professionalism and sensitivity, and use words like 'brilliant' among others to describe her leadership.
- Significant changes to staffing have had an impact on the quality of teaching and outcomes overall. However, the headteacher has an entirely accurate and perceptive view of the school's effectiveness. Supported by governors and more-experienced teachers, the headteacher is implementing well-thought-out plans for improvement. As a result, teaching and outcomes are improving steadily.
- The headteacher has helped a new team of teachers to establish themselves quickly in the school. Her expectations about the quality of teaching are high and she is working tirelessly to help her team to improve. Teachers are held accountable through performance management and through leaders checking regularly on their teaching.
- Other leaders are now having an impact on raising standards. The new early years leadership has been quickly established and is enabling children in the Reception Year to make faster progress. A recent change in leadership responsibility for mathematics this year has already led to improved teaching in some aspects of the subject.
- Leadership of the curriculum is proactive and takes a collaborative approach to planning with other teachers. Curriculum themes are specifically planned to meet the needs of, and to excite, pupils. Some topics are specifically designed to encourage reluctant writers. Other topics make effective use of rich experiences such as visits and trips to bring learning to life.
- Teachers and teaching assistants value the professional development opportunities they receive both in school and from within the local 'A3' partnership of schools. Recent development opportunities have led to improvements in the teaching of phonics and the accuracy of assessment.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Primarily, it is used to improve the emotional and social outcomes for vulnerable pupils. For example, the school provides an effective home-school link worker and specialist speech and language provision. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are included in trips and visits.
- The sport premium is used very well to promote pupil participation and well-being. Pupils have many opportunities to try a wide range of sports and other physical activities such as yoga and tai-chi. There are regular opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions against other schools. These are enjoyed greatly by pupils, and help them demonstrate a sense of sportsmanship.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently carried out by the headteacher. Under her leadership the identification of additional needs has been quicker, provision has been improved and partnerships with parents and other agencies enhanced.
- Specific funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent wisely. For example, providing the 'bears' nurture group has enabled a small

group of pupils to succeed both in their social development and in their learning.

- In the absence of both an assistant headteacher and a special educational needs coordinator, the headteacher is having to do too much herself to raise standards. This additional burden interferes with her ability to give sufficient time to planning strategically for the future.
- The local authority has recognised that the school currently needs some additional support. For example, it has commissioned some additional support with the leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this only started at the time of the inspection. Local authority advisers are now visiting the school more regularly to check on progress.

Governance of the school

- There have been recent changes in the membership of the governing body. The chair of the governing body provides strong leadership and is ably supported by the chair of the standards committee. The core group of experienced governors is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. These key governors have ensured that the headteacher is supported and challenged equally well. They have checked that the headteacher uses additional funding appropriately to support vulnerable pupils. Governors visit the school regularly to check on improvements.
- The governing body has clear ambitions for the future of the school and recognises the improvements that need to be made. Governors have the right skills to challenge leaders to make improvements quickly. In recruiting new governors they have sought out the skills they need most. The governing body has sensible plans to strengthen the leadership team. Governors are determined to give the headteacher much needed support so that teaching and outcomes can be improved quickly.
- The governing body has consistently ensured that the school is a safe and happy place for pupils to learn. Governors hold leaders to account to make sure that pupils are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education, having been enriched by their time at the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures and are all vigilant when checking on the welfare of pupils. Staff spot and respond to any concerns, however small, because the school has a culture where adults know every pupil well. Pupils know there is always an adult they can talk to.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead. She keeps detailed and timely records about the most vulnerable pupils. She works well with parents and professionals from other agencies to get the best for her pupils.
- Rigorous and detailed records of any significant behaviour incidents are kept by the headteacher. These incidents are now very rare.
- Checks on the recruitment of staff are carried out in line with statutory guidance. However, some administrative errors relating to these checks had to be corrected

during the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently effective and as a result pupils do not make enough progress over time. Sometimes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave.
- On occasions, teachers do not give pupils clear instructions about what they are expected to do. Valuable time is sometimes wasted organising resources and activities.
- Assessment is accurate; teachers check their judgements with each other and with colleagues in other local schools. The majority of tasks and activities are planned appropriately to build on what pupils can already do and help them make progress in their learning. However, teachers and other adults do not check closely enough on how well pupils are progressing during lessons. As a result, pupils are not given additional support or more challenging work when they need it.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, helping them make better progress. They also lead focused work with groups of pupils well. However, teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively, especially during lesson introductions, meaning that some pupils who require additional help do not receive it.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers ask pupils searching questions that make them think and also give pupils opportunities to discuss ideas together in a structured way. Teachers sometimes model to pupils what they expect and this guidance helps pupils to learn well. When teachers challenge pupils to give reasons for their views it stretches even the most able pupils to think deeply.
- Sometimes, interesting tasks require pupils to use their existing knowledge, skills and understanding from different subject areas together. For example, Year 2 pupils used their observational drawing skills effectively when learning about insects in science.
- The teaching of phonics is improving because teachers and teaching assistants have received professional development and training to help them teach this essential area accurately. Pupils increasingly apply their phonics knowledge accurately in their own writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving because the leader responsible has ensured that all teachers appreciate the importance of pupils understanding the number system and mastering calculation skills. However, leaders recognise that now the focus needs to be on applying these skills to solve problems more regularly.
- Parents believe that their children are taught well and are making progress. They feel that their children receive appropriate homework. Parents appreciate the information they receive from the school about how well their child is progressing.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The headteacher gets to know every child and their family when they join the school and as a result can look out for their welfare. Parents are proactive in school life and enjoy being part of the community. The family support worker is successful at making the partnership between school and home even stronger.
- The 'bears' nurture group gives the pupils who attend a positive opportunity to improve their social skills and self-confidence. Clear expectations and high levels of care from the staff help pupils learn to self-regulate and manage their behaviour and emotions well.
- Pupils enjoy taking on special responsibilities, for example as members of the school council, where they represent the views of their classmates, or as 'playground pals' that make sure everyone has someone to play with. Inspectors observed pupils sensibly negotiating and solving minor problems at playtime themselves.
- Pupils say that their teachers are kind and keep them safe at school. They told inspectors that any unkind behaviour or bullying is dealt with well by adults. Pupils can clearly explain how they are kept safe at school. For example, pupils explained the procedure they follow when the fire alarm rings.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to improve their physical and emotional well-being, including through activities such as yoga and tai-chi.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils care for each other and behave well around the school. They are polite and friendly to visitors. On the playground, pupils choose their own games and play well together.
- Behaviour in most lessons is good. Occasionally, where teaching is less effective or teachers do not yet have high enough expectations, there is some off-task behaviour.
- Those pupils who find it more challenging to manage their behaviour are improving over time because of the clear expectations and specific support they receive from additional adults.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils take pride in their work and present their learning neatly.
- Attendance is above average, showing that pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school regularly. The school works together well with those families where attendance has not been good enough in the past in help make improvements.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils in key stage 1 have not recently made enough progress. As a result, attainment at the end of Year 2 has been broadly average despite pupils having a wide range of well-developed skills and knowledge when they join the school.
- Attainment in the new mathematics assessments in 2016 was relatively weak. Pupils did not make enough progress from their starting points to demonstrate the higher standards required.
- This picture has since improved. Pupils are currently making expected progress in mathematics. This is because the leader responsible for the subject has given teachers clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils are developing their fluency and confidence with numbers and calculation. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils, including the most able, to demonstrate a deeper understanding in problem-solving and reasoning tasks.
- Attainment in writing at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 was broadly average; however, the pupils who had fallen behind had not been supported well enough to catch up with their peers. They are now making better progress. Inspectors saw evidence of current pupils who have fallen behind, developing and using their skills in spelling and handwriting well to help them catch up.
- Not enough pupils met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Too few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have achieved the required standard before they leave the school. This area is also improving, however. Teaching has started to improve, and those who did not meet the standard in 2016 are catching up quickly.
- Pupil premium funding is enabling disadvantaged pupils to make better progress than in the past. They are no longer falling further behind, but are not yet making rapid enough progress to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Reading outcomes are stronger because pupils make faster progress in this key area. Pupils read frequently and enjoy a range of books both at school and at home. The most able pupils are challenged well to read more substantial books, allowing them to demonstrate a greater understanding of what they read.
- Pupils develop their knowledge and skills in science well, so that they meet the expected standard by the end of key stage 1. Inspectors observed pupils applying their reading and artistic skills to find out and record scientific information for themselves.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make a good start to their education in the Reception classes. The new leader and the other class teacher are reflective about their practice and are implementing improvements to make the provision even stronger. They ensure that children are safe and well cared for.
- In recent years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been improving and is now above the national average. Consequently, children are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1. Children currently in the Reception classes are

making faster progress than in previous years because teaching and leadership has improved.

- Parents feel included in their child's learning from the moment they join the school. Parents appreciate the regular updates on their child's learning through the school's electronic recording system. Teachers welcome the comments from parents about their child's learning and key events at home. The partnership between school and home in the early years is strong.
- Children play and learn happily alongside and with each other. They make sensible choices about working indoors or outdoors and about which resources they will use. They show great independence when putting on their wellies to go and play in the muddy area.
- Staff in the Reception are nurturing and supportive. However, some teaching assistants are less successful at challenging children's learning to make them think more deeply. Leaders have recognised this and have provided additional training to improve this aspect of the provision, especially for the most able children.
- Teachers use observation to carefully assess how well children are learning and developing. They are able to quickly recognise when children need additional support and put this in place. Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils who have additional needs with speech and communication.
- Teachers and other adults teach phonics skilfully and accurately. Children understand technical terms such as 'digraph' and know this in where two letters together make one sound. Children apply their phonics knowledge well in their own writing.

School details

Unique reference number	116021
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024654

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Steer
Headteacher	Teresa Offer
Telephone number	01730 892666
Website	www.lissinfantschool.co.uk
Email address	office@lissinfant.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is less than half that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly typical. A larger proportion of pupils than found nationally have their needs catered for by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The majority of teachers have joined the school this academic year. There is currently a vacancy for an assistant headteacher and special educational needs coordinator.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school collaborates with other schools as part of the 'A3' partnership.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection started as a section 8 short inspection. During the first day, the lead inspector converted the inspection to a full section 5 inspection. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors quality-assured the first day of the inspection. He took over as lead inspector on the second day and was joined by two team inspectors to complete the inspection.
- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and in the nurture group. All of the observations on day one and some observations on day two were carried out with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, middle leaders, teachers and governors. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation of its own effectiveness; plans for improvement; behaviour and attendance records; safeguarding records including recruitment checks; and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at many examples of pupils' learning in workbooks. Some of this scrutiny was conducted with the headteacher or middle leaders.
- Parents' views were gathered through informal discussions at the beginning of the inspection and through 50 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors met with the school council and heard some pupils in Year 2 read. Inspectors talked with pupils informally in lessons and around the school to gain their views of the school.
- Three responses to the confidential staff questionnaire were considered.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nik Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Wibroe	Ofsted Inspector
Gerida Montague-Munson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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