

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Natasha Farrell
Headteacher
Locks Heath Junior School
Warsash Road
Locks Heath
Southampton
Hampshire
SO31 9NZ

Dear Mrs Farrell

Short inspection of Locks Heath Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

The school has gone through an unsettled period since the last inspection, with many changes of staff, including those in senior roles. You arrived at the school in September 2016, and the deputy and assistant headteachers have also taken up their roles in the past two years. There has also been significant movement in the teaching staff of the school, which has seen some staff leave and other newly appointed teachers arrive. Staff who are new to the school benefit from a thorough induction programme, as well as ongoing support and professional development. Morale is high and staff form a united, hard-working team which aims to achieve the best it can for pupils at the school.

During this period of change, pupils at the end of Year 6 have continued to achieve well. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the national average. The proportions of pupils who achieved the higher standards in reading and writing were also above those seen nationally. However, you agreed with me that levels of expectation for pupils' written work across the school are inconsistent.

Most parents and carers are positive about the school and would recommend it. They feel that pupils are well looked after and enabled to achieve well. One parent

said that leaders and teachers alike '... work tirelessly to ensure that the children are happy and that they reach their full potential'. Many parents comment on the way that teachers work hard to enable pupils to achieve well, and to keep them safe in school. However, a significant minority of parents are much less happy about aspects of the school's work. This reveals some weaknesses in the systems for communicating with parents. Some feel that issues that arise are not always dealt with effectively by senior leaders, and so unresolved problems persist. These include some incidents of bullying and bad behaviour, especially at free times. Evidence suggests that there is some substance to parental concerns. Senior leaders are well aware of these and are taking steps to improve matters.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Most pupils attend school regularly but, as you acknowledge, disadvantaged pupils' attendance is still too low. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and try to do their best. Many pupils talked enthusiastically about their lessons and the way that teachers make learning enjoyable. Pupils reserved particular praise for the residential visits that each year group undertakes. They appreciate the way that these visits present opportunities for pupils to face challenging situations and overcome fears, such as in tackling climbing walls. However, the wider curriculum lacks the breadth and depth required to enable pupils to achieve well across a wide range of subjects.

Pupils are confident in staff to take good care of them and keep them safe in school. However, several pupils talked about incidents of rough play bubbling over into unruly behaviour on the playground, especially at lunchtimes. Pupils say that not all staff are quick enough to notice these incidents and nip them in the bud.

Teachers use accurate assessments to inform their teaching. They maximise the use of pupils' learning time by planning lessons so pupils can move quickly to learning at the right level for them. This addressed one of the areas that inspectors asked you to improve at the previous inspection. Inspectors also asked you to provide more opportunities for middle leaders to share their skills with colleagues. Subject leaders now have more clearly defined roles, and you have plans to further increase their scope of influence.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils are safe in school because senior leaders ensure that the right policies, protocols and procedures are securely in place. All who work in the school have had regular training so that they are very clear about how to identify and report any concerns about a pupil. The yellow and blue forms used in school help staff to distinguish between a concern that needs urgent attention, and one that needs to be recorded to form part of a picture of wider concerns at a later date.

Governors undertake important checks of the school's work, including making sure that the right checks have been carried out on people who work in the school. They also review all aspects of health and safety. For example, they check the school's accident book to make sure that any patterns of accidents are noted and investigated. Governors have also responded effectively to concerns about the

security of the school site by installing suitable perimeter fencing.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to focus on four aspects of the school's work during this inspection. The first of these was to explore the progress that pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, are currently making in the school. We looked particularly at writing and mathematics. Leaders' actions to improve outcome in mathematics are having a positive impact. Pupils have good levels of fluency with number. Teachers provide quite challenging problems and activities which require pupils to apply their knowledge, reason mathematically and make links across different areas of the subject. This supports pupils' good progress in mathematics, including disadvantaged pupils.
- In some years groups and in some classes, pupils are making good progress in writing. Where progress is strongest, pupils take great care with, and pride in, their work. They develop sophisticated vocabulary and punctuation, and write in an accurate, convincing style. However, you agreed with me that the progress seen in writing and topic books varies too much from class to class, and does not show consistently good progress across the school.
- The wider curriculum was the second area I focused on. At the moment, the curriculum focuses strongly on the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils also achieve well in science and have opportunities to plan experiments and test ideas for themselves. In addition, you rightly regard music and physical education as strengths of the school, as teachers have good subject knowledge and are well supported by specialist teachers. Your swimming pool offers pupils the chance to become strong swimmers.
- You agreed with my judgement that the curriculum does not allow pupils to achieve well across a wide range of subjects. Leaders at all levels have well-advanced plans to improve the curriculum, increasing the breadth and depth of coverage and making links across subjects, where appropriate.
- I also looked closely at how effective governors and senior leaders have been in ensuring that leaders new to their roles are supported and challenged. Leaders receive strong support when taking up a new role. They receive effective training and coaching, including support and training provided by the local authority. Where possible, they shadow previous post-holders before taking on new responsibilities. Leaders at all levels have a clear view of their roles and understand the need to promote high standards and good teaching in their subjects. However, as the wider curriculum is not well enough developed, leaders of subjects other than English, mathematics and science have not had the chance to fully develop their role, nor to see the impact of it.
- The fourth area I investigated was the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. In recent years, these pupils have attended much less regularly than they should. This academic year, leaders have focused sharply on reducing rates of absence and can point to several families where their efforts have resulted in more frequent attendance at school. The attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities

is starting to improve. However, this is not the case for disadvantaged pupils. Rates of absence for these pupils remain stubbornly high and too many miss out on the benefits of regular attendance at school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff have the same consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in their written work
- all staff understand and consistently apply the school's systems for supervising pupils at free times
- all incidences of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively, making sure that pupils and parents are happy with the resolution
- strategies for communicating with parents are strengthened, and any queries or concerns from parents are addressed promptly and thoroughly
- disadvantaged pupils benefit from the same good levels of attendance as others in the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Waelend
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, other leaders and six members of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. Together with other senior leaders, we visited classes from all year groups in the school to look at teaching and learning. We looked at pupils' work. I met with a group of five subject leaders. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at playtime, and had a meeting with a large group of pupils from all year groups. I took into account the 21 responses to the staff survey and the 107 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 71 written comments. I spoke to several parents at the beginning of the day and took into account four letters from parents. The school's self-evaluation documents and development plan were also considered. I examined the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.