

Liss Infant School

Hillbrow Road, Liss, Hampshire GU33 7LQ

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There have been considerable changes to the school since the previous inspection. Turbulence among the teaching and leadership team has prevented the school from making more rapid progress.
- Leaders are striving to address variations in the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics are not as good as they should be. Work provided for pupils is not always at the right level of challenge. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers do not always make clear exactly what they want their pupils to learn. In some lessons, teachers try to cover too much ground and consequently pupils become confused about what they are learning.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work to build their stamina for writing. They do not all punctuate or spell as well as they should. Consequently, standards in writing are too low.
- In some lessons, valuable learning time is lost, such as when pupils move slowly between tasks. There is not always enough challenge for the most able pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Since her appointment in September 2018, the executive headteacher, supported by her leaders and governors, has acted decisively to tackle areas of weakness.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are happy, they enjoy school and they feel safe in school. Adults provide high-quality care for them.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. They have a good grasp of skills, including phonics, that helps them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Provision for early years is a strength of the school. This is because the new leader has a good understanding of the learning and developmental needs of young children.
- Governors provide a good balance of support and professional challenge to school leaders.
- Subject leaders have acted on guidance and help from the local authority. They have put into place actions to raise standards.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations for what pupils, particularly the most able, can do
 - all teachers make the best use of time so that pupils learn more
 - teachers plan lessons that focus precisely on what they want pupils to learn.
- Improve pupils' outcomes, particularly in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to write at length when learning subjects other than English
 - pupils learn to spell and punctuate their work accurately and that their handwriting is neat and correctly formed
 - work in mathematics is pitched at the right level of challenge for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the school has federated with the adjacent junior school under one governing body. The headteacher of the junior school was appointed to the role of executive headteacher of both schools. There have been several changes to the staff and the leadership team. Currently, two teachers are on maternity leave and their classes are being taught by supply teachers. The early years leader joined the school in January 2019 and a Year 2 teacher joined the school in September 2018.
- The headteacher has high expectations and has established a clear vision and direction for the work of the school. This is reflected in her aim for all children to be 'curious, resilient and well prepared for the next stage of their education'. The headteacher has worked with staff and governors to establish a shared vision so they all understand what they are aiming to achieve.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and where further improvements are needed. They know that pupils' outcomes in writing and mathematics need to be improved and they are taking appropriate action to raise standards. However, frequent changes to the teaching team have impacted adversely on the pace at which improvement can be brought about.
- Since the federation took place, school leaders and governors have strategically reviewed staff skills and talents to ensure the most useful deployment of staff. This has increased leadership capacity, particularly in subject leadership of English and mathematics as well as leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work closely together as a team and staff morale is high.
- School leaders provide good support to staff to help them to fulfil their roles more effectively. Leaders visit classrooms formally as well as informally to see how well pupils are learning. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified, leaders provide support and training to improve teachers' skills. While this is starting to bring about improvement, more needs to be done to secure consistently good teaching.
- The curriculum is well planned to give pupils exciting experiences that add to their enjoyment of school. Subjects are often linked together so that pupils gain a broad perspective on what they are learning. For example, a recent topic on 'Titanic' gave them insights into geography, history and science.
- The curriculum is well supported by a range of educational visits to help pupils to appreciate what they are learning. The provision of art, music and dance is of good quality and helps to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. British values, including respect and tolerance, are threaded through the curriculum. This helps pupils to understand that all people, regardless of background, should be treated equally and fairly. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The additional funding for sport is thoughtfully used to promote a variety of sporting activities, including dance. Some of the funding is used to employ sports coaches who work with both teachers and pupils. This helps to build a sustainable programme for physical education as teachers develop their skills alongside the pupils.
- Additional funding to support pupils who are disadvantaged or with SEND has been

reviewed. It is allocated to ensure that both groups of pupils are provided with support that helps them to make good progress from their relative starting points. A portion of the additional funding is used to provide support for those pupils to attend Lunch Club, where they eat lunch in a quiet and calm environment. Here, they can share their concerns, play games and have a settled start to the afternoon activities.

- Advisers from the local authority have provided good support to school leaders and teachers. As a result, subject leaders are taking appropriate action to bring about required improvements.
- While a number of parents expressed concern over the high turnover of staff, many were complimentary about recent changes. This was reflected by one parent who wrote, 'The school has improved dramatically in the past year. The focus on learning is clear.'

Governance of the school

- Governors acted decisively to strengthen leadership after the previous inspection. Following the retirement of the former long-standing headteacher, they oversaw the federation with the adjacent junior school to increase the capacity of leadership across both schools. They worked in close cooperation with the local authority and all stakeholders to secure a smooth transition as the federation took place. Since then, they have been instrumental in supporting leaders to create a strategic plan showing how the school is to develop over the coming years. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and they know precisely what actions leaders are taking to bring about the required improvements. They have their own governor monitoring plan that aligns closely to the school improvement plan. By doing this, they check that school leaders are on track to meet their developmental priorities.
- Governor minutes show that they are well organised and that they provide a good level of support and professional challenge to school leaders. They ask pertinent questions so they can be sure that what school leaders report is an accurate picture of what happens in school. They are very aware of the need to remain strategic partners rather than becoming involved in the day-to-day running of the school. Governors manage the business side of their work well and they ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled in a timely way. They ensure that all requirements for safeguarding pupils are effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors have created a culture of safeguarding in which all aspects of keeping pupils safe are of high priority. To that end, they have updated all policies and guidelines so that all staff are fully up to date with actions they need to take should they have a concern that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Governors ensure that all staff are fully trained and that leaders keep staff aware of any concerns that arise. All staff have been trained to use the electronic recording system for safeguarding so that they can look out for patterns that might point to an emerging issue.
- School leaders check on the suitability of staff to work with pupils and all visitors to

school are carefully checked. There are good relationships with external agencies so that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the right support in a timely way. The large majority of parents who responded to the survey agreed that their children were happy and safe in school.

- Pupils are taught to stay safe in school. Different aspects of safety are taught through the curriculum across the year. For example, firework safety is taught in the autumn term and safety in the sun is covered in the summer term. Pupils take part in events such as anti-bullying week and walk to school week. Internet safety is woven through the curriculum as well as pupils learning about internet safety through a designated safer internet day.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across the school and is not yet consistently good. This is because not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. In a few classes, teachers do not make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. They set learning objectives that are overcomplicated and the purpose of the lesson is unclear.
- Sometimes teachers try to put too much content into the lesson and so pupils do not embed their learning before moving on to something else. Pupils do not routinely move smoothly and efficiently between tasks, wasting learning time.
- Where teaching is effective, pupils are encouraged to share their ideas, which gives them more confidence to respond to teachers' questions. Most teachers use questioning well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, some of the work they set for pupils is too easy. This limits progress for some pupils, particularly those who are most able.
- Wherever possible, teachers link subjects together so that pupils gain a broad understanding of what they are learning. Often there is a class text to stimulate pupils' imaginations. Effective teaching of subjects including history, music and art adds to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school. This helps to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers have a good grasp of their subject and they explain clearly to pupils what they are to do. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, the teacher showed pupils a simple technique to edit and improve their work. This helped pupils to understand how choices of words can make a difference to the quality of their own writing.
- In most classrooms, teachers make effective use of practical resources to help pupils to understand their work. For example, in mathematics lessons, pupils use practical counting equipment to help them to work out and record simple number sentences.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND are provided with helpful support in classrooms. This is often led by trained teaching assistants who work alongside these pupils. They help pupils by explaining what they have to do and so keep these pupils engaged in learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are ambassadors for the school. They enjoy school and they like their teachers and teaching assistants. They say that they feel safe in school because all adults care for them and help them in class or in the playground.
- Pupils get on very well together, helping and cooperating with each other. They are kind, polite and friendly. They say that adults treat them equally and fairly and that they have equal opportunities to take part in what the school offers. They know it is unkind to call each other names or to hurt each other.
- Pupils want to learn and this is reflected in the positive attitudes they demonstrate in classrooms. They show respect towards staff and towards each other by listening carefully and behaving appropriately. They take care of their classrooms and respond quickly to teachers' instructions.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying but are adamant that it does not occur. They say that there are times when pupils fall out but that adults are always on hand to sort out any minor disagreements.
- The playground is very well equipped with small and large equipment including musical chimes that pupils enjoy. While pupils create their own games and activities, there are few occasions when adults in the playground lead playtime games.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in classrooms and when moving around the school. Staff have consistent systems to manage pupils' behaviour and so pupils understand how they are expected to behave. While the majority of pupils behave well in class, there are times when a few display low-level disruptive behaviour. This occurs when they do not understand what they are expected to do.
- School leaders have introduced a new policy to manage pupils' behaviour and both staff and governors report that this is working well. There has been a marked reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour. There have been few reported incidents of poor behaviour and fixed-term exclusions have reduced.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. The most recent attendance information shows that pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics was below the national average while reading was in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in writing and mathematics was below the national average.
- Although there are signs of improvement in writing, some pupils in Year 2 have a

legacy of underachievement. Their handwriting is not always formed correctly and they do not spell or punctuate their work as well as they should. There are too few opportunities for them to write extensively to build their stamina for writing.

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in mathematics. This is because they are not always provided with work that is sufficiently hard. Work in their books shows that there are too few opportunities for them to record their work independently.
- In Year 2, there are opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills to solve word problems and to give reasons for their answers. By using their skills in this way, they are deepening their understanding of number and gaining a fluency in their mathematical development.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have maintained the standards from previous years. They have a good grasp of phonics that they use to read unfamiliar words. They respond to questions about the story by referring to the text. They read fluently and confidently and with obvious pleasure.
- Teachers do not consistently check on pupils' learning and so they do not always provide them with harder work when they are ready. As a result, pupils, especially the most able, are provided with insufficient challenge and do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Systems to identify and support those pupils with SEND have improved. While there are still times when pupils with SEND are taught by teaching assistants, some teachers are now teaching these pupils themselves. This is increasing the level of expertise for these pupils, who now make similar progress to their classmates.
- Pupils work hard in other subjects in the curriculum. They develop knowledge and skills in subjects including science, history and sports. The quality of art on display around the school is good.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years and are well prepared for the demands of Year 1. They are warmly welcomed into a stimulating and attractive environment where they make good progress across all areas of development. This part of the school is currently being led by an acting early years leader who joined the school in January this year.
- The new early years leader has a good understanding of the learning needs of young children. As such, she is able to plan experiences and activities that allow children to develop their personal and academic skills effectively across all areas of learning. The early years leader has already brought about significant improvements to the quality of provision that are leading to improved outcomes for children.
- The early years leader has worked alongside her team to establish areas that encourage children to learn and play indoors as well as outside. She knows that there is scope to develop the outdoor area further to enhance learning for children.
- Teaching is good in the early years. This is because systems to record children's learning have been improved. This means that activities can be more precisely tailored to the needs of children. Children make good progress by learning through play. For

example, children learned about doubling numbers and counting in twos by placing an equal number of spots on both halves of a ladybird when making pictures of ladybirds.

- Children make good progress in writing. Many can already write neatly, using correct letter formation and plausible spelling to write sentences and short recounts. Most know that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop and this is demonstrated in their writing.
- Teachers in the early years plan exciting experiences that create a sense of awe and wonder among children. During the inspection, caterpillars formed into chrysalises, which generated a real sense of excitement as children watched this process happening. Teachers look for such opportunities to develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children have a real sense of right and wrong. They share and they take turns and they readily help each other. Adults act as good role models demonstrating the behaviours they want children to learn. As a consequence, there is a very positive learning atmosphere in the early years.
- Children enjoy school and they feel very safe. This is because adults care for them. Adults carefully observe children and record what they do and say. While most adults are skilled at intervening and supporting children's learning, not all of them provide enough help and guidance when children make basic errors such as incorrect letter and number formation. This prevents children from making even stronger progress.

School details

Unique reference number	116021
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10088123

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

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	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Steer
Headteacher	Jilly Myers
Telephone number	01730 892 666
Website	www.lissinfantschool.co.uk/
Email address	jmyers@lissinfant.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school became federated with the adjacent junior school in September 2018. The headteacher of the junior school was appointed as executive headteacher of the federation at the same time. This followed the retirement of the previous long-standing headteacher of the infant school. There have been several changes to the teaching team since the previous inspection.
- The school has been in receipt of support for English, mathematics and SEND from advisers from the local authority.
- The school is smaller than most primary schools and pupils are taught in single-age classes.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage although there has recently been an increase in the numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is lower than usual.
- There is a smaller proportion of pupils with SEND than found in most schools

nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils working in 12 classes. Most observations were carried out jointly with school leaders. They looked at work in pupils' books and they listened to pupils read in Year 2.
- Discussions were held with school leaders and four governors, including the chair of governors. A meeting also took place with two representatives from the local authority.
- Among the documents scrutinised were school development plans, minutes from governors' meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also scrutinised information showing how the school keeps pupils safe.
- The views of parents and carers were taken into account by analysing 43 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and 41 responses to free-text. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents during the inspection. The views of staff were taken into consideration by analysing 12 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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