

Lonesome Primary School

Grove Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1SD

Inspection dates

9–10 July 2019

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have worked effectively to reinvigorate teaching so that pupils make better progress. This work is most evident in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and in the early years.
- Middle leaders bring energy and enthusiasm to the work of the school. They say that they have benefited from being part of the school's federated leadership arrangement and they enjoy opportunities to share and model good practice for colleagues.
- The recently federated governing body has been instrumental in improving the school. Governors know the school's context very well and are proud of what Lonesome pupils bring to the federation of local schools.
- The local authority took decisive action to support governors and senior leaders in raising the quality of education at the school.
- Staff are committed to providing pupils with a balance of excellent care and guidance and academic challenge across a range of subjects. This prepares them well for secondary school.
- Teaching is good overall. While some teaching provides exactly the right degree of challenge, this varies. Therefore, some pupils do not make the same good progress as others.
- Teaching improves pupils' skills strongly in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in other subjects is less secure and varies considerably.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well because of good leadership and skilled teaching which meets their individual needs.
- Pupils' attendance has improved over time, and this reflects the importance placed on it by leaders and staff. It is now average for all groups of pupils.
- The school's motto of 'Be Different' is understood by pupils and helps them show respect, tolerance and kindness towards each other. They are well behaved, work hard and appreciate the care given to them.
- In the early years, good provision means that children make strong progress and are very well prepared for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make outstanding progress in all subjects by ensuring that:
 - all teachers are given support and training so that they consistently teach lessons of an excellent quality across the full range of subjects
 - work is sufficiently challenging and routinely meets the needs of all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders have worked successfully to develop teaching through an increased focus on staff training and professional development. This has raised teachers' expectations and improved the quality of education that pupils receive. As a result, standards have risen, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are fully aware that this focus now needs to be placed across all subjects of the national curriculum.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their plans for improvement focus on the areas in need of most attention. The chief executive headteacher and head of school provide a united vision for improvements in teachers' expertise.
- Middle leaders contribute enthusiastically to the school's work to raise standards. They work with teachers, focusing on the quality of work produced by pupils in their key stages or areas of responsibility. This is leading to greater consistency of teaching and shared high expectations.
- The leadership of SEND is a strength of the school, being expert, enthusiastic and well coordinated.
- Senior leaders have consistently placed teacher training and development at the heart of the school. This has been supportive of both long-serving staff members and those who are recent or temporary appointments. All teachers have benefited from this focus and have received clear feedback that shows how their work has led to increased rates of progress. Leaders are aware of gaps in some teachers' subject knowledge and have taken steps to provide ongoing training and development.
- Leaders make regular use of assessment information to check on the progress pupils are making and to identify when some pupils might need additional support. Teachers also use this assessment information to help them plan learning activities. Nevertheless, some inconsistency remains in the extent to which teaching meets the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Extra help for those pupils who need to catch up forms the basis of this work. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are now making nearly the same progress as other pupils nationally.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium enables the school to provide additional playtime sports equipment and specialist sports coaching. This coaching has also led to teachers becoming more skilled in the teaching of PE. Pupils benefit from a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, such as competitive sporting events. These opportunities are effective in promoting pupils' fitness and enjoyment of physical activity. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools bronze award.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is helping pupils to acquire an understanding of life in modern Britain. The school's values place mutual respect at its core, embodied in the 'Lonesome Charter'. Together with the 'Be Different' shared motto with its federation partners, the Charter contributes positively to the life of the school.

- The curriculum at Lonesome is broad and diverse, though not all subjects are taught effectively in all classes. Leaders have carefully maintained pupils' entitlement to the national curriculum while at the same time improving teaching and progress rates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has received useful external support from the local authority's school improvement service. This service has a good understanding of the school and has provided the school with advice. It has also helped in the development of the federation and increasing leadership capacity at the school.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, the school's governing body has become a federated board. This has reinvigorated the direction the school is taking, providing a much stronger governing body with a clear sense of purpose.
- Governors are drawn from wide professional backgrounds. They carry out their duties diligently and take opportunities for training and development. They have recently undertaken a skills audit in order that their expertise is used best to serve the school.
- Governors understand the school's local context well and offer both significant challenge and support to the school's leadership team. They are keen to promote the school further so that it is fully recognised for the contribution it makes to the federation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all members of staff are trained in child protection and have the necessary skills and knowledge to promote pupils' welfare. The school's policies and practice are up to date and suitably thorough. A culture of safety exists in the school. Leaders and staff work closely with parents and carers, as well as external professionals, to ensure that all pupils are supported and as safe as possible.
- Pupils are very confident that the school is a safe place; parents and staff at the school who responded to Ofsted's surveys or spoke with an inspector agree with this view. Key staff have ensured that safer recruitment training and practice are up to date.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching across the school is good overall. Staff have very positive relationships with the pupils. Most teaching shows high expectations of what pupils can achieve and uses time and resources well. However, some variability in teaching exists throughout each key stage.
- The strongest teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and appropriate expectations of pupils' abilities; deep understanding of pupils' abilities is used to plan, pitch and deliver lessons of an extremely high quality. Where teaching is less successful, planning does not show the same insights and sometimes fails to capture the interests of all pupils.

- The teaching of reading is closely linked to the development of pupils' writing skills. This has helped pupils to acquire the skills necessary to write in a way that can really capture the reader's interest.
- Teaching of mathematics is effective in making tasks challenging and interesting for all pupils. The teaching places emphasis on developing pupils' conceptual understanding so that they can apply their learning to new and increasingly difficult problems.
- In key stage 1, recent improvements to the teaching of early reading skills (phonics) is helping a higher proportion of pupils get off to a good start in learning to read well. Over time, pupils have become avid readers and relish taking books from the school's excellent library and extensive classroom facilities.
- Additional adults support pupils with SEND effectively and motivate them to try hard. Pupils know that the staff want them to do well. In turn, this has developed pupils' positive attitudes towards learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders ensure that the welfare and care of pupils help them to work more effectively at school. Pupils work and play together harmoniously because they have embraced the school's values. They are taught to show tolerance of diversity as well as compassion for others. Pupils are also encouraged to work hard and to demonstrate resilience.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a sound awareness of different faiths, backgrounds and cultures. Pupils demonstrate respectful and considerate attitudes and show respect for each other, even if they hold different beliefs or points of view. They are well prepared to play a positive role in modern Britain.
- Positive messages about how to tackle and respond to bullying have been helpful to pupils. Pupils say that bullying rarely takes place at the school, though were it to occur, they know the systems that exist to support them. Teachers ensure that pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep safe while working on the internet.
- Through different subjects, including health education, pupils are made aware of key aspects of keeping healthy, such as the importance of a good diet and regular exercise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly, both in classrooms and around the school site.
- The school communicates well with parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. One parent's comment, typical of others, was: 'I am so proud of how the school has transformed my children. They are always eager to attend. The school is heading for greater heights under the leadership team.'
- Most pupils attend regularly and on time each day. The school has maintained a focus on this area; this has proved very effective and demonstrates the positive attitudes of pupils and parents.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the past three years, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has broadly been average or above. However, in 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average.
- Leaders have successfully addressed this, and current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is shown by the school's assessments of pupils' progress over time, work in their books and their learning in classrooms. This is the result of good teaching over time.
- In 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check was slightly below the national average. This year's pupils have attained higher scores as a result of teachers' clear commitment to getting children reading as soon as they start at the school.
- Most pupils clearly enjoy reading, and leaders have ensured that a wide variety of good-quality reading materials is available to them. Book areas in classes are well resourced, and the school has a well-stocked library. This promotion of reading is helping pupils to broaden their reading as well as improving their vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- Careful use of the pupil premium funding is helping to support the good progress that disadvantaged pupils make in all curriculum areas. Their progress in writing is now improving because of the school's careful analysis and the resulting actions.
- As a result of clear leadership, pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of learning and they learn well. Leaders use assessment information effectively to monitor the progress of these pupils and ensure that they receive the help they need to make good and better progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of early years is effective, showing a solid understanding of the strengths and weaker areas of the current facility and with clear plans for improvement.
- Children learn well and make strong progress from their starting points. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is rising steadily, although it remains slightly below that of other schools nationally. Children develop very positive attitudes to school life in the early years and are well prepared for moving into Year 1.
- Across the Reception and Nursery classes, teachers create a welcoming learning environment which interests children in activities that they find enjoyable. Skilful teaching ensures that children get plenty of experiences in learning how to read and write. This is clearly exemplified in the Reception classes, where children are keenly involved in their activities. An example of this seen by inspectors was children's sequencing of their own version of the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They chatted to each other and the teacher about the story and the teacher made good use of questioning to extend children's vocabulary.

- Typically, children settle down to work well and are kind towards one another. Children in the Reception class are showing increased skill in writing. Many children are able to write clearly and use basic punctuation when they write sentences about stories they have heard in class.
- Children get off to a good start in learning to read. They are actively encouraged to develop a love of books in the Nursery class, and this helps them enter Reception class with some good early reading habits and an interest in books.
- The learning environment in all classes is vibrant, both inside and outside. There are many opportunities to develop number and writing skills, for example by writing labels to accompany their play activities.
- Classrooms are well resourced and staffed so that children can learn independently or with adults, as they choose. Teaching assistants work very well to support children with additional needs in their learning, for instance in helping children to identify colours in the Nursery class.
- The school has developed effective partnership working with parents; they make a valuable contribution through 'holiday work'. The attendance rates of children in the three classes has improved recently because of the recent work undertaken with parents.

School details

Unique reference number	102636
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10088891

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paisley Ashton-Holt
Chief executive headteacher	Nathalie Bull
Head of school	Julie Revell
Telephone number	020 8648 1722
Website	www.lonesomeprimaryschool.co.uk/
Email address	lonesome@lonesome.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with 15 being represented. The largest group of children are of White British background, with children from Other White backgrounds forming the next sizeable ethnic group.
- The school became federated with two local primary schools in the spring of 2019. This federation has been given the name of the 'Be Different' federation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms in all year groups, several jointly with members of the school's leadership team.
- The inspection team heard pupils read in Year 2. They talked to pupils in classrooms and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan and records of pupils' behaviour, safeguarding and attendance. They also scrutinised assessment information and records of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with teachers and spoke with pupils. A meeting was held with members of the governing body. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority. Several meetings were held with the executive headteacher and head of school.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 to gather their views.
- The views of parents were obtained through informal discussions, the 21 responses to the online Parent View survey and 13 responses using the online text facility.
- The views of staff were examined through the 28 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Tim McLoughlin, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rekha Bhakoo	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Harvey	Ofsted Inspector

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