

Inspection of a good school: Loughton School

Bradwell Road, Loughton, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK5 8DN

Inspection dates: 12–13 November 2019

Outcome

Loughton School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Loughton School enjoy many opportunities to learn new things in interesting ways. The acting headteacher has worked effectively with staff to develop a curriculum that captures pupils' interests and imagination.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They have worked hard to make sure pupils learn well in a range of subjects. Teachers plan work that helps pupils succeed.

Staff make sure that pupils are safe in school and are cared for well. Pupils say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will sort out any issues. Staff and pupils show a high level of respect for one another.

A range of different clubs, such as those for needlework and mindfulness for example, help pupils to develop as 'rounded' individuals. High-quality before- and after-school care gives pupils opportunities to interact successfully with each other.

Pupils take their different responsibilities very seriously. For instance, the 'green team' looks to increase the proportion of pupils walking to school. Pupils are proud to receive awards for helping to keep the planet 'green'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have developed a curriculum where pupils learn well across the full range of subjects. This is enriched by interesting trips and visitors. Whether speaking German on a school trip to Germany or designing and making helmets for Roman soldiers, for example, pupils find their learning exciting.

Pupils enjoy reading and read frequently. Because leaders make learning to read a priority for all pupils, the vast majority of pupils leave the school reading confidently. However, pupils' enjoyment of reading is restricted by the limited range of high-quality books available. The reading leader ensures that there is helpful additional support for any of

the younger readers who may need it. For instance, daily group support helps pupils to close gaps in their phonic knowledge. Leaders' work to check if this is helping pupils to catch up is in the early stages of development.

The new senior leadership team has already undertaken significant work to develop the curriculum. It is well planned in all subjects. Senior leaders are supporting new subject leaders to put curriculum plans fully into place. Progress in writing is particularly strong. Teachers' use of interesting texts, for example, inspires pupils to write descriptively.

Teachers deliver lessons that help pupils to discover new things and remember previous learning. Pupils work hard and can recall lots of examples of things they have remembered. For instance, in history, they readily recall facts about key people during the Second World War. This learning helps pupils to understand why a two-minute silence for Remembrance Day is held.

Leaders make sure that adults know how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They provide support and training to ensure pupils with SEND have positive attitudes towards their work and are engaged in all activities. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.

The curriculum is not limited to academic subjects. Pupils enjoy wide-ranging activities that take place both during and after the school day. For instance, pupils take part in an annual Shakespeare festival. They recently performed in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

Pupils conduct themselves well. They say that any bullying in school is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning. Behaviour in lessons is good and low-level disruption in lessons is minimal. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and focus on their learning.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because leaders have made it a good place to learn. Consequently, attendance has improved and is in line with national averages. Leaders' strong work to improve pupils' behaviour has resulted in a significant reduction in exclusions.

The vast majority of staff and parents and carers are positive about the school. They have confidence in leaders. The work of trustees is effective. They hold leaders to account and have a strong focus on the well-being of staff and pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding is consistent with the caring ethos of the school. Staff receive regular training and updates. They are vigilant and aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They confidently identify pupils who may be at risk and take appropriate action when required. Leaders follow up safeguarding concerns rigorously. They work well with other agencies and families to support pupils who may need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders should ensure that any support provided to help pupils catch up in their phonics or reading helps pupils to do so quickly and securely.
- A significant number of subject leaders are new to their roles. Senior leaders should support subject leaders to be well equipped to ensure curriculum plans are implemented fully and successfully.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139861
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10111345
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Cuthbert
Headteacher	Rebekah Green
Website	www.loughton.milton-keynes.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2016

Information about this school

- The acting headteacher took up her post in September 2019. She was previously the school's deputy headteacher.
- Trustees plan to begin the appointment process for a permanent headteacher in January 2020.
- The members of the senior leadership team are all new to their posts. They have all been promoted within the school. As a result, many of the school's subject leaders are new to their roles.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the acting headteacher, the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, the business manager and eight trustees. I also met with two family links workers and a local authority school improvement partner, commissioned by the school's trustees.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing and history. I met with subject leaders and visited lessons with them. I talked to pupils about their work and discussed the school's approach to curriculum delivery with teachers. I asked some pupils to read

their work to me and listened to a teacher read to her class.

- I reviewed the single central record and attendance information, including exclusions. I met with the designated safeguarding lead and two of the school's deputy designated safeguarding leads. We discussed systems and processes, as well as considering case studies. I talked to parents, pupils and staff about safeguarding and checked that practice was consistent across the school.
- I considered 75 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, along with a number of written comments.
- I considered the views of staff and pupils who completed Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sarah Varnom, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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