

Inspection of a good school: Little Digmaor Primary School

Abbeystead, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 9NF

Inspection dates:

5 December 2019

Outcome

Little Digmaor Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school at the heart of the community. Leaders are ambitious for pupils to succeed, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders' high expectations are shared by staff. Teachers spark pupils' curiosity through the many trips and visits that enrich their learning experiences. Pupils are eager to learn. They work hard in lessons.

Pupils proudly wear the new uniforms which they have helped to design. They appreciate the opportunity that they have to contribute to the life of the school. Pupils value the responsibilities that they are given. For example, the eco committee organises litter picks in the local community. Pupils enjoy the many sports clubs and activities that they can join.

Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They listen respectfully to the ideas of others. Pupils behave well in school. They play happily together at breaktimes. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They are confident that staff will deal with any bullying swiftly. Pupils feel safe because they know staff care about them. Pupils are confident that there will always be someone to talk with if they have any worries.

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

Leaders have identified the barriers to learning for many pupils. They have designed a curriculum to help pupils to overcome these barriers. The curriculum plans develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in a broad range of subjects. Leaders provide opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons. The curriculum sets out what pupils need to know. In most subjects, pupils apply their knowledge effectively to new learning. As a result, pupils know more and remember more. Most pupils achieve well at the end of Year 6, including pupils with SEND.

The teaching of reading is central to pupils' learning. Phonics teaching is given a high priority from the start. Children in the Reception Year practise what they are learning in a

range of stimulating activities. For most pupils, the books they read match the sounds that they are learning. They quickly become fluent readers. Most pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils who fall behind receive the help that they need to catch up. However, this does not always make enough difference. Some of the books that this group of pupils read do not match the sounds that they know. As a result, they struggle to read new words. This group of pupils take too long to become fluent readers. Plans are in place to resolve this issue.

Pupils enjoy listening to the stories that teachers choose because they are interesting, and teachers read with expression. Older pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and the opportunity to discuss their favourite authors. Pupils' increasing vocabulary knowledge helps them with new learning in other curriculum subjects. They often choose books that link to the topics they are studying.

Leaders identified that many pupils were not secure in the key mathematical concepts of multiplication, division and place value. This is because teachers sometimes move learning on too quickly. This has had an impact on pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6, which is lower than the national average. Improvements to the way that mathematics is taught are beginning to improve pupils' knowledge. Training for staff has enabled them to quickly identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers ensure that the youngest children understand basic number facts in the early years. This prepares them well for Year 1. Pupils who are struggling are beginning to catch up because of the help that they receive.

In other subjects, teachers check what pupils know, and they remember to plan what pupils will learn next. Disruption in lessons is rare because teachers' planning meets the needs of pupils well. For example, field work in geography enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding further. Pupils develop their understanding of geographical features through walks in the local area. Older pupils explained how they used what they know when comparing Skelmersdale to the port of Liverpool.

Pupils thrive in the nurturing environment that leaders have created. Leaders provide a range of exciting experiences to raise pupils' aspirations for the future, for example visits to the local university, to the theatre and to museums. Pupils develop their resilience when facing new challenges during residential trips. Pupils are proud of the support that they give to groups in the local community.

Leaders make sure that staff receive the support and training they need to deliver the planned curriculum well. Staff work with other colleagues in the school to share their knowledge and expertise. This is particularly helpful for staff new to teaching. Staff feel valued and well supported by leaders.

Governors are proud to be part of this happy school. They use their knowledge and skills effectively to ensure that leaders maintain a good quality of education. They understand the challenges and advantages of being in a small school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know the pupils and their families very well. They quickly identify any signs of risk. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns. Leaders work with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that vulnerable families have the help that they need. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not have a secure understanding of key mathematical facts and concepts, because teachers sometimes move on to new learning too quickly. As a result, some pupils struggle to apply their knowledge effectively. Leaders need to build on the steps they are taking to ensure that teachers check what pupils know and understand, including pupils who are struggling, before moving on to the next steps.
- For some pupils, especially those who need to catch up, the books that they read do not always match the sounds that they know. As a result, they often struggle to decode unfamiliar words. This hinders pupils' fluency as readers. Leaders need to ensure that books match the sounds pupils know accurately.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged Little Digmaor Primary School to be good on 19 April 2016.

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	119297
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10122088
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	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joanne Hill
Headteacher	David Paton
Website	www.littledigmoor.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 April 2016

Information about this school

- The school has a before- and after-school club, which is managed by the governors.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We spoke with the chair of governors, three members of the governing body, the headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff. We also spoke with a representative from the local authority by telephone.
- We considered the eight responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 11 responses from the online staff survey. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.
- We looked in detail at several subjects. These were reading, mathematics and geography. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning. We also looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- During the inspection, we reviewed a range of documentation, including curriculum plans. We also scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Shutt

Ofsted Inspector

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