

Inspection of a good school: Limington House School

St Andrew's Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 6PS

Inspection dates:

4–5 December 2019

Outcome

Limington House School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy and well cared for in this kind and inclusive school. They attend well and enjoy the many different experiences, such as day and residential trips and working in the community. They also take pride in their involvement in assemblies. Most parents and carers are very positive about how effectively the school meets the individual needs of their child. Staff take great care to ensure that all pupils can communicate in ways that best suit them.

Pupils are keen to learn. They rise to the challenge of high expectations and use support from staff to prepare for their next steps. Younger pupils learn to play and communicate appropriately and enjoy learning outside, exploring a range of outdoor equipment. As they move through school, pupils understand the importance of becoming as independent as possible and aim to join the further education group.

Pupils behave well and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school. Bullying is very rare, and where there are problems, often centred on communication, staff deal with these quickly and help pupils to understand what has happened.

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

Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of what all pupils should learn, and share this effectively with all staff. Teachers and learning support assistants work in effective teams to ensure plans for learning identify what pupils should learn and when. These plans help pupils to build and link their knowledge so they can solve more challenging tasks. Teachers check what pupils already know and remember, though this is mainly carried out at the end of lessons rather than during them. They use this information to plan what to teach next, although some pupils have to wait longer than they need to for their next task. This makes sure that pupils work towards the long-term goals of their education, health and care plans.

Staff focus on developing pupils' communication needs. They do this to make sure

everyone can join in with all aspects of learning. Pupils who are unable to talk use a range of resources to enable them to communicate. All staff use signs and symbols well to support learning and understanding. Independence is a key part of all lessons, supporting pupils to have high expectations of what they can achieve. All staff encourage pupils to achieve as highly as they can. This includes those in early years and the further education group.

Pupils prepare for adult life through a range of experiences both in and out of school. Lessons have a range of activities to encourage pupils to develop their confidence. Pupils enjoy regular trips out into the local community, and are able to go on residential trips to outdoor education centres. These experiences help pupils and their families to prepare for their next steps into adulthood.

Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and using symbols to communicate. They like to read books and most pupils are happy to share their views about books with their class. Staff use the libraries regularly to bring reading to pupils with even the most complex needs.

Staff use a range of methods to help pupils to understand and remember concepts. For example, in science, they learn about how different rocks are formed by using layers of food. Younger pupils enjoy experimenting by making potions and some pupils with the most complex needs explore different textures and sounds.

Children in early years make a good start to their education. They learn to communicate well. They settle into school routines, which the curriculum is built on, and learn to use signs and symbols. Staff use a practical approach to successfully help children to use their learning and apply it to different situations. They enjoy working outside and use the range of equipment, including the sensory music garden, to fuel their curiosity for learning.

The further education group is a strength of the school. Students respond very positively to the mature ethos of the group and develop their independence. For example, students are responsible for preparing their own snacks at breaktimes and many of their meals at lunch. They study appropriate qualifications depending on their needs. Leaders work hard to make sure that students and their families are prepared for life when they leave school. An example of this is the school's 'futures evening', when families can meet a range of providers to help make positive plans.

Staff are proud to work at their school. They say that leaders and governors are considerate of teachers' workload. They feel that leaders support them both professionally and personally, particularly with their work-life balance.

Leaders and governors know which aspects of the provision they need to improve. They have recently established a small middle leadership team in order to increase the capacity of leadership and to support the school's future success.

Most parents are very supportive of the school. Many of them commented on how much they appreciate the support and help their children have had to help them develop their independence. One parent commented: 'Our child is flourishing at Limington House.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a well-established safeguarding culture in the school. Clear systems, rigorously checked by governors, are in place to support pupils, so they are safe in school. Leaders and governors ensure communication difficulties for pupils are overcome by using a range of methods to help them to understand how to stay safe.

Pupils know there are trusted members of staff they can speak to. Staff are trained to know what to do if they have concerns. The safeguarding team provides effective support for pupils. They also work relentlessly to ensure that agencies give the support expected when it is needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders and governors have begun a change in the middle leadership structure of the school. This needs careful consideration to ensure that the training and development of staff continue, in order to grow leadership capacity. This will support the school to be ready for unexpected challenges.
- Assessment within lessons is not always used effectively. This means that teachers do not always adapt tasks quickly enough. Leaders need to ensure that staff continue to develop assessment so that they can make sure no one is waiting to move on during a lesson.

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 October 2012.

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 the provider and 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	116614
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10088223
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Roy Cleaver
Headteacher	Justin Innes
Website	www.limingtonhouse.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 November 2015

Information about this school

- Pupils have a variety of complex and profound special educational needs that affect their ability to access the curriculum and learning.
- The number of pupils attending the school has increased since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. We also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- We evaluated the quality of education. We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, and personal, social, health and economic education. We discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and, where possible, spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the curriculum.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was

reviewed. We met with the designated safeguarding lead and his team.

- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- We considered the views of 17 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- We took account of the 26 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the 27 free-text responses.
- We met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and communicated to pupils informally about the school.

Inspection team

Gary Tostevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Christine Bulmer

Ofsted Inspector

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