

Inspection of a good school: Littledown School

Queens Road, Slough, Berkshire SL1 3QW

Inspection dates:

5–6 February 2020

Outcome

Littledown School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils join Littledown School at various times during the school year. Many have previously had years of negative school experiences. They are often very anxious. To address this, leaders have created useful booklets that tell pupils what to expect when they join. They cover school routines and the subjects pupils will study. As pupils settle into the school, they begin to develop trusting relationships with staff and start to feel valued. Pupils told us that 'staff keep their promises here'. This helps pupils to feel secure, safe and happy.

Staff have high expectations of every pupil. In lessons, pupils work hard and listen carefully to the teacher. Around the school, there are photographs of pupils achieving well in all aspects of the curriculum, such as reading. Pupils enjoy forest school, where they learn about the natural environment. They discover how to climb trees and make dens.

The school behaviour policy is known to all. It is clear and fairly applied. Pupils want to behave well and usually regulate their emotions. Pupils do not consider that bullying is an issue at the school. They are confident that if there were any incidents, they would be resolved quickly.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that meets pupils' needs. Pupils study a broad range of interesting subjects. Leaders want pupils to be well prepared for their futures. In the mornings, there is often a quiet hum of learning while pupils work on developing their English and mathematics skills. In the afternoons, leaders aim to 'provide subjects that pupils excel at'. Subjects are planned so that pupils can build their skills in a step-by-step way. For example, in cookery, pupils learn how to use kitchen implements and appliances. They then learn how to follow a simple savoury recipe. During the inspection, pupils were proud of the Israeli mushroom and onion couscous they had cooked.

Staff take every opportunity to develop pupils' social skills. They lead by example and always reward pupils' positive interactions. At lunchtimes, pupils learn how to follow rules in sport, such as football. In lessons, pupils usually behave well. They say that they enjoy their learning and appreciate the fact that staff have 'confidence and faith in our abilities'. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They often review past learning to make sure that pupils still retain that knowledge. This helps pupils to usually achieve well. However, because some support assistants do not always have enough mathematical knowledge, they sometimes do not recognise pupils' misconceptions.

Reading is a high priority across the school. Leaders know that they need to help pupils to conquer their fear of failure. Some pupils said that they did not want to read at their previous schools because 'I didn't want to make a mistake'. At this school, pupils learn to recognise that making mistakes is part of learning. New pupils who have often fallen behind in their reading are given intensive support to catch up. Pupils read daily and gradually become confident and fluent readers. This often gives them a real sense of pride and achievement. Older pupils develop a love of reading. They can talk assuredly about the plots and characters in the different books they have read.

The school provides well for pupils' wider personal development. Staff give pupils the opportunity of becoming more independent during residential trips. The 'enabling enterprise days' provide a broad range of experiences that build team skills. Recently, pupils visited a local authority highways department. They learned about civil engineering and had to design, cost and build different types of bridge. Experiences such as these help to boost pupils' self-esteem.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are caring and well trained. They take their responsibilities seriously. All staff, including the designated safeguarding leads, follow up concerns promptly. They make sure that pupils get the help and support they need. Pupils have regular lessons that teach them how to stay safe. They cover areas such as internet safety and pupils learn about online dangers. Leaders work well with a range of outside agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Pupils, parents and carers, and staff consider that pupils are safe in this school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some support assistants do not have enough knowledge of mathematical concepts. This means that they do not pick up on pupils' misconceptions. Support assistants need to have further training in mathematics so that they have the skills to help pupils to build on their knowledge and understanding.

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 predecessor school, also called Littledown School, to be good on 8–9 May 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 the school 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	140244
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10133182
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Hazel Thorpe
Headteacher	Jo Matthews
Website	www.littledownschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 July 2016

Information about this school

- Littledown School is registered for 38 pupils. It provides for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, speech and language difficulties or a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Nearly all pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school also runs an alternative provision for 17 pupils. This has two main parts. There is a nurture class for pupils aged between five and seven. These dual-registered pupils attend Littledown every day and also attend their mainstream schools for three afternoons a week. Their placement lasts for about four terms. Currently, there are some key stage 1 pupils on roll but no Reception-age children.
- Pupils in the rest of the alternative provision attend full-time. These pupils have been permanently excluded or have been moved to the alternative provision in order to meet their needs while awaiting an EHC plan. These pupils are fully integrated into the school. They are taught alongside the special school pupils.
- The school provides outreach behaviour support to local primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, other senior staff and class teachers. We also met with three trustees, including the chair, and a member of the local governing body.
- When considering the quality of education, we did deep dives in reading, mathematics, computing and personal, social and health education. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to leaders, staff and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds pupils' knowledge over time.
- We checked that pupils are kept safe. We looked at training records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils about their safety and well-being. We also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- We took into account 24 responses to the staff survey. We reviewed six parents' responses to Ofsted's online parent survey and free-text messages. We also held informal discussions with parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Linda Jacobs

Ofsted Inspector

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