

Inspection of a good school: Loatlands Primary School

Harrington Road, Desborough, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 2NJ

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 March 2022

Outcome

Loatlands Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's core values of respect, resilience and curiosity are woven through all areas of Loatlands Primary. Pupils enjoy going to school and say that it is 'a great place to make new friends'. They treat each other with respect and are well mannered. Pupils feel safe in school. They are well looked after. Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it is rare. When it does happen, teachers deal with it effectively.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations. They behave well both in lessons and around the school. In most lessons, pupils are enthusiastic about what they are learning. They enjoy discovering new things. They are focused on their learning and classrooms are calm. On the playground, pupils play well together. They enjoy spending time with their friends.

Pupils value the responsibilities given to them, such as house captains and play leaders. They appreciate the important role of the school council and how this allows them to share their views.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Leaders have a clear vision for how they want to develop the school. They have worked hard to improve the curriculum they offer pupils. However, leaders have not adapted the curriculum consistently well in all subjects.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils begin to learn the sounds that letters make as soon as they start school. They are well supported in the early stages of learning to read. Staff pay attention to how well pupils learn sounds. The books used by pupils to help them learn to read are well matched to the sounds they know. However, sometimes pupils who begin to struggle are not helped to catch up as quickly as they could be. Leaders have thought carefully about the books pupils are exposed to. The library is an inviting place to be and pupils enjoy their time there. Pupils say that they enjoy reading.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this to clearly explain new things to pupils. Curriculum planning in many subjects is well sequenced. For example, in mathematics and history, teachers plan learning that builds on what pupils already know. In these subjects, pupils are very clear about what they are learning and how what they already know helps them to learn new things. However, other subjects such as computing and religious education (RE) are not developed to the same high standard. In RE, pupils do not remember what they have been taught as well as they do in history, for example.

In history, leaders have designed the curriculum to develop pupils' understanding of the passing of time and its impact on our lives today. Pupils remember detailed historical facts. They enjoy their lessons. Year 4 pupils explained how significant people from the past have shaped their lives. As one said, 'If it wasn't for Thomas Edison, we would be sitting in the dark or with candles.'

Adults expect pupils to explain their thinking using the correct subject vocabulary. This begins when children start in the Nursery. Adults have created a language-rich environment for children to learn. Children exploring outside after a rainy day described the ground as 'soggy'. In a mathematics lesson, children in Reception used the correct vocabulary when exploring different ways to make 10.

Leaders have worked quickly and effectively to improve the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The teachers and teaching assistants know the needs of pupils and these pupils are usually well supported in lessons. On occasion, adults do not break down the learning well enough to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND.

The school promotes pupils' personal development effectively. There are a range of clubs on offer to pupils, including running, archery and book club. Pupils enjoy the strong links the school has with the local community.

Staff are proud to work at this school and appreciate the 'team ethos'. They feel well supported by leaders. Most parents are happy with the education their children receive. However, some feel that communication between home and school could improve. They do not always know what their children are learning or how to support them at home.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know how to spot signs of potential risks to pupils' safety. Leaders know what to do when worried about a pupil. They seek further advice when needed and work well with other agencies

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and the clear majority of parents agree. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe both inside and outside the school gate. Pupils know various ways of alerting others if they are ever worried or concerned. Pupils learn how to stay safe when using the internet and social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have improved the quality of education. However, not all areas of the school's curriculum are sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about and are making any necessary amendments in response to the pandemic.
- Leaders have a clear intent for the curriculum. They have outlined what they want pupils to learn and when. However, there are inconsistencies in the teaching and implementation of some aspects in the curriculum. Adults do not consistently address pupils' misconceptions effectively, including in phonics. Leaders should ensure that all adults have the expertise to address pupils' misconceptions and that they use information about what pupils have not learned well to support their future learning.
- Most parents appreciate the work the school does to support their children in school. However, communication with parents has not always been as successful as it should be. Parents do not always receive important messages and information they need about their children. Leaders should ensure that systems of communication are strengthened in school so that all parents are well informed.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Loatlands Primary School, to be good on 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	140059
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10199890
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Malcom Toovey
Headteacher	Laura Buckley
Website	http://www.loatlandsprimary.net
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school has a nursery which caters for three-year-old children.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection.
- The Pathfinders Schools Trust supported the school to employ an interim assistant headteacher with responsibility for special educational needs and disabilities in January 2022.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders, including the interim assistant headteacher with responsibility for special educational needs and disabilities.
- The inspector met with two representatives from the Pathfinder Schools Trust, including the chief executive officer. She also met with the vice chair of the local governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. She also looked at or discussed curriculum planning in these subjects: computing, physical education, geography, religious education and music.
- The inspector spoke with parents. Account was taken of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and three letters from parents. She also spoke with groups of staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the interim assistant headteacher to discuss safeguarding. The inspector met with staff to discuss their understanding of the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. She considered documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's single central record and the system for undertaking checks on new staff.

Inspection team

Heidi Malliff, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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