

Inspection of a good school: Lydford Primary School

School Road, Lydford, Okehampton, Devon EX20 4AU

Inspection date: 4 May 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to school and feel safe. They trust staff to care for them and their parents agree. Pupils speak about their school with immense pride. They particularly enjoy reading and after-school activities, such as football and gardening. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. Consequently, all the parents who responded to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, would recommend this school to another parent.

Communication between school and home is frequent and collaborative. For example, leaders expect parents to play a role in helping their child to practise reading. Parents listen to their child at home and record their comments in reading journals. Staff use this information wisely, as part of their wider checks on whether pupils are improving their reading.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Pupils receive a broad curriculum. However, the curriculum does not provide all pupils with the knowledge and understanding they need. Too many pupils have gaps in their learning.

Staff understand and apply the school's behaviour policy well. This means that there is a consistent response to the rare incidents of classroom misbehaviour. Pupils behave well and understand the school rules. They are adamant that there is no bullying in school.

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

The school has experienced some challenges in recent years. The impact of significant staff changes and COVID-19 have resulted in some aspects of the school's curriculum requiring attention. Leaders have taken the decision to improve the curriculum in a logical and coherent manner, to improve any previous weaknesses. They have put in place an

agreed timeline for the full implementation of an improved curriculum. They rightly prioritised reading and mathematics. Staff appreciate the way leaders have taken their workload and well-being into account when communicating their expectations for further curriculum improvements.

Leaders have strengthened the reading curriculum successfully. In the past, staff used a blended approach from various phonics schemes to teach pupils how to read. Leaders reviewed this approach recently and introduced a new early reading and phonics programme. Teachers check pupils' reading progress regularly and use this information to provide additional support, when necessary. Pupils who need to catch up are doing so quickly. Pupils love reading. One pupil summarised the views of many with the comment, 'If I had the option, I would read all day.'

Other aspects of the curriculum revisions are less successful. In those subjects where the curriculum is not as strong, including mathematics, leaders have not prioritised teachers' expertise and subject knowledge in order to meet the new curricular demands. Leaders have not ensured that all staff have received the precise training they need. Some staff have weak subject knowledge and lack expertise in selecting appropriate teaching approaches. Assessments of what pupils know and remember are not used to shape the future curriculum effectively. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders have not ensured that children in the early years have a strong start to their education. Staff changes have hampered leaders' scheduled improvements to the curriculum. Nonetheless, children learn to read well as soon as they start school. They have appropriate books that match their stage of reading development. Many other areas of the early years curriculum, including mathematics, are weak. Staff have not considered the precise knowledge pupils need to learn and how to go about teaching it. The learning environment is not used to promote learning, engage children's interests or develop curiosity well enough.

Leaders identify pupils' additional needs swiftly. They make suitable checks to assure themselves that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff support these pupils to learn alongside their peers, with appropriate curriculum adaptations when needed. Consequently, most pupils with SEND achieve success. Pupils know how to behave well and learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

The wider curriculum helps pupils make informed choices about staying safe and being healthy. Pupils learn about locations that are different to their own through purposeful educational visits. For example, pupils visit Bristol to learn about city life, and compare this to their school's rural setting. Other aspects of pupils' social, moral and spiritual development are weak. Pupils learn about racism and how society's reaction to it has changed over time. However, they do not have a secure understanding of debate, law and democracy. They have little knowledge of diversity and equality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive appropriate training. They know how to identify signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff understand and follow the school's systems for reporting concerns diligently. Leaders work effectively with a range of other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate support. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through assemblies and the curriculum.

Leaders make rigorous checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work in school. There was an administration error in the safeguarding documentation. However, it was corrected during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have established a clear curriculum purpose. However, specific subject curriculums are at various stages of development. Some subjects have not been reviewed. Others, such as mathematics, have been implemented with weaknesses. Leaders need to ensure that the quality of the curriculum meets their ambitious intent.
- Some staff have weaknesses in their knowledge and skills. They are not supporting pupils to learn effectively in some subjects or in specific year groups. Consequently, too many pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stage in their education. Leaders must ensure that all staff are equipped with secure subject knowledge and a sound pedagogy.
- Leaders know that the early years curriculum requires urgent attention. Children are not receiving the precise support they need to succeed in many areas of learning, including mathematics. Leaders must ensure that the early years curriculum is improved swiftly so that children are prepared for Year 1 well enough.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Lydford Primary School, to be good in January 2014.

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	145332
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227685
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tania Skeaping
Principal	Adam Hill
Website	www.lydford-primary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust in January 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is small compared to other primary schools nationally. Pupils learn in two mixed-age classes.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors did deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. This included discussions with subject leaders, lesson visits, looking at examples of work, discussions with teachers, discussions with pupils and listening to pupils read to an adult. They also considered evidence gathered about some other subject curriculums, such as music.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs leader, staff and governors, including the chair of the local stakeholders' board.

- The lead inspector spoke with the trust's chief executive officer and trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, surveys, improvement plans and documentation relating to behaviour.
- Inspectors examined safeguarding records, checked staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. Inspectors also met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors considered the 21 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 12 free-text comments. They also took into consideration responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Sue Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Ryder

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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