

Inspection of Lynsted and Norton Primary School

Lynsted Lane, Lynsted, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0RL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

A nurturing environment helps children at Lynsted and Norton Primary School settle into Reception very well. They enjoy coming to school to learn and play together. Parents of the youngest children describe the school as 'superb'.

Older pupils have a strong sense of security at school. Every pupil has a trusted adult who they can go to with any worry. Each class has an 'Ask it basket', which enables pupils to seek help, advice or to share their thoughts and feelings. While bullying is rare, staff do not always investigate pupils' concerns about bullying and unkind behaviour thoroughly enough.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They understand and respect the school's 'Good to be Green' behaviour system. Pupils are now motivated to learn. Pupils and parents appreciate the significant improvements that leaders are making to the quality of education. There is, however, more work to do to ensure that all pupils get the teaching and support they need to achieve well in all subjects. Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. These pupils do not benefit from the improvements leaders have made to the quality of education.

Pupils are pleased that leaders are now establishing more regular trips that link to pupils' learning and broaden their experience. There are increased opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles in the school, including being involved in the school council and a sports leader programme for pupils.

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

Leaders have improved the overall quality of education significantly since the last inspection. Reading has been a key priority. Leaders ensure that all staff are experts in the teaching of reading. Teachers ensure that pupils are taught to read effectively and get enough practise reading books. There is catch up in place for any pupil who has fallen behind.

Children's love of reading is developed right from the start of Reception. Pupils throughout the school can confidently talk about the books they enjoy. They have benefitted from recent opportunities to visit a local library. Leaders plan these visits carefully to ensure, for example, that all pupils have enough books to read over the summer holidays.

While pupils now follow a broad and balanced curriculum, there is more to do to ensure that all pupils achieve well across all subjects. Leaders' curriculum thinking is not always clear. They set very ambitious learning goals for pupils, but leaders do not think carefully enough about what pupils need to learn and in what order to achieve these ambitious goals. There is a different picture in early years, where curriculum thinking is far more developed. Here, teachers and support staff have a

clear and shared understanding of what children need to know and be able to do to be ready for Year 1.

The lack of clarity in leaders' curriculum thinking means that teachers are not always clear about what pupils in key stages 1 and 2 need to learn and remember. This means teachers do not always focus on the right things or explain things clearly enough. Teachers do not always know how to adapt lessons to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve the best possible outcomes in their learning. Other than in early years, lessons do not consistently build upon what pupils already know and remember.

Pupils often enjoy their learning. They remember some key facts. For example, pupils in Year 6 could talk with confidence about particular aspects of the world wars. Pupils do not, however, build a connected body of knowledge in each subject they study. Teachers do not check pupils' understanding sufficiently well. As a result, teachers do not always pick up on gaps in pupils' understanding or their misconceptions. In early years, children develop their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. Staff in early years use assessment to identify what children know and understand, their misconceptions and their next steps in learning.

Leaders have introduced a clear curriculum to support pupils' personal, social and health education. However, some staff need more training in how to teach pupils about sensitive and complex issues. Teachers also use regular circle time to promote and reflect upon the school values of ambition, self-confidence, perseverance, independence, respect and enquiry.

The school offers a small number of clubs, including a creative writing club. Pupils need more opportunities than are currently on offer to develop their talents and interests. While the school is inclusive, the curriculum does not coherently and intentionally promote diversity.

While behaviour in classrooms is calm and focused, some pupils say that they have experienced other pupils being unkind to them. Leaders have not established a clear enough anti-bullying strategy or approach to responding to allegations of bullying. They do not record all the concerns that pupils share, and this means that concerns are not always resolved well enough.

School and trust leaders, as well as those responsible for governance, share a clear and ambitious vision. They aspire to provide pupils with an excellent education in their village school. They want the school to be at the heart of the local community. Those responsible for governance provide leaders with strong support and challenge so that the school continues to make progress towards this shared vision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. Leaders have trained staff to identify when a pupil might be at risk of or is suffering from harm. Each week, leaders carry out a brief safeguarding refresher for staff to revisit key safeguarding updates and messages.

Staff know how to raise a concern on the school's safeguarding system. Leaders work proactively with families, providing support and assistance at the first sign that a family is struggling. Leaders aim to prevent difficulties from escalating and the need for external support. In a small number of instances, however, leaders have not ensured that all actions taken to protect pupils have been recorded. Leaders recognise that, sometimes, families need more support than the school can provide. In these instances, leaders work with external safeguarding partners effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' approach to bullying is not strong enough because they do not plan their strategies or ensure incidents are recorded with enough precision. When pupils report bullying or friendship difficulties, the response from staff is inconsistent. Concerns around bullying and other potentially harmful behaviours are not always fully investigated. Leaders need to strengthen their anti-bullying approach so that staff are more confident and consistent in responding and recording their actions.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. These pupils do not benefit fully from the education the school offers. Leaders have begun to address this issue, but this work must remain an urgent priority.
- In several subjects, the curriculum does not break learning down into clear, well-sequenced steps of learning. Additionally, leaders' curriculum thinking in these subjects does not address the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders need to continue to ensure that there is a clear and shared understanding of what pupils should learn in each subject.
- Not all teachers have the necessary expertise to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND do not have enough opportunities to apply what they know and can do with increasing independence in lessons. Pupils with SEND do not always achieve the best possible outcomes. Leaders need to train teachers so that they are more proficient at adapting learning to meet the needs of all pupils, ensuring they achieve the best possible academic outcomes.
- As leaders have not set out clearly enough what they want pupils to learn in some subjects, teachers do not fully understand what pupils need to learn. This means that teachers are not always aware when pupils have not learned important knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the support they need to improve their formative assessment of what pupils know and remember.

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.

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	137467
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10241511
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	73
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair	Helen Stewart
Headteacher	Catherine McLaughlin
Website	www.lynsted-norton.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined a newly formed multi-academy trust in June 2021.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2021.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.

- Inspectors met with executive leaders within the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer. Inspectors met with those responsible for governance, including a representative of the board of directors, and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. For the reading deep dive, inspectors listened to pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the early years provision through all deep dives and also met with early years leaders.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record and spoke to those responsible for governance, trust leaders, school leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors considered the safeguarding education that pupils receive. Throughout the inspection, leaders considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school improvement plans, minutes from recent meetings of the local governing board and the board of directors.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, formally and informally, about their learning, what behaviour is like at school and whether they felt safe at school.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to the staff and pupil surveys and responses to the parent survey, including the associated free-text comments. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers at the gate during the inspection.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Toby Martlew

Ofsted Inspector

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