

Inspection of Laburnum Primary School

Laburnum Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 1HQ

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires Improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Laburnum Primary want to do well. However, the opportunities they have to learn and play safely are affected by the disruptive behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. These pupils do not follow the school rules or respect consequences. Therefore, for many pupils, poor behaviour is accepted as the norm.

Although bullying is not common, pupils report frequent physical incidents, swearing and being distracted from learning by others. As a result, pupils say they do not feel safe in school. Pupils are not confident that staff can stop poor behaviour from happening. Parents also express concern about their children's safety.

While pupils experience a wide range of subjects, the quality of education they receive is not good. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils have opportunities to extend their experiences beyond the curriculum. This includes learning to play an instrument, cooking, theatre visits and accessing clubs. They take on responsibilities and are proud to be members of the eco-committee or school council.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. This is intended to ensure pupils, including those in early years, have the opportunity to build their knowledge over time. Leaders are knowledgeable about the subjects they lead. However, leaders and teachers have limited opportunity to focus on the quality of education. Too much of their time is taken up with dealing with poor behaviour. Teachers do not always check thoroughly what pupils know so do not adapt activities carefully to meet pupils' specific needs. Therefore, some gaps in pupils' knowledge and misconceptions are not addressed. As a result, pupils are not achieving as well as they could.

Leaders have ensured pupils are given access to high-quality texts and vocabulary through a well-thought-out reading curriculum. Most pupils have a secure understanding of what they read. They develop reading fluency through regular phonics sessions and having reading books that help them practise the sounds they learn. Pupils who struggle with learning to read receive additional help. This support is not always effective because teachers do not check closely enough that it is appropriate. Therefore, readers with gaps in what they know do not catch up quickly.

Children in the early years experience a range of learning opportunities, many of which help prepare them for Year 1. In the Nursery class, adults interact well with children when they are playing. This helps them to develop their language and independence. This does not happen as well in the Reception class. However, the

curriculum throughout the early years is typically better adapted to children's needs than it is in the rest of the school.

The behaviour policy is not fit for purpose nor well understood. Leaders have not put in place clear systems that all staff and pupils understand. Adults do not apply consequences for poor behaviour consistently. A significant minority of pupils continue to show poor conduct and disrupt learning, including some pupils with SEND. Leaders' actions have seen a small reduction in the number of pupils regularly not attending school. However, absence is still too high.

Pupils understand democracy through elections to the school council. They enjoy regular cooking sessions to help them understand healthy lifestyles. Pupils understand that discrimination is wrong. They know learning about other religions helps them to respect different viewpoints. However, some pupils do not use their understanding of respectful relationships when interacting with each other.

Staff feel leaders are supportive of their well-being and workload.

While leaders know what needs to be done to improve the school and have sought external support, there is a lack of rigour and urgency in the actions leaders have taken to date. Governors do not hold leaders sufficiently to account. They are aware of the issues but have not asked appropriate questions to challenge what is being done to improve key aspects of the quality of provision, particularly behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders do not have effective strategies to ensure pupils are protected from the risk of physical harm from some pupils' poor behaviour.

Safeguarding records about pupils are detailed and securely stored. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know how to identify and report concerns.

Although pupils know who to report concerns about their safety to, they do not have confidence that staff will be able to keep them safe.

The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe in many different situations.

All necessary checks on adults who work in school are carried out.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Approaches taken by leaders to address poor conduct are not well understood or routinely applied. This means that pupils are at continued risk of physical harm and anti-social behaviour from other pupils, which also disrupts pupils' learning. Pupils do not feel safe. They do not have confidence in staff being able to keep them safe from the behaviour of some pupils. Leaders need to ensure that the behaviour policy is reviewed, so it is fit for purpose, and consistently applied by all, so that the school becomes a calm, safe and orderly environment for everyone.
- Leaders and teachers do not check that the strategies they use to support pupils who are struggling to learn to read are appropriate. This means pupils who need additional support with learning to read are not catching up quickly enough. Leaders and teachers need to regularly check the impact of reading interventions to ensure that all pupils become confident and fluent readers.
- Too many pupils, including some with SEND, are not supported to access classroom learning successfully. Often the result is that their behaviour deteriorates. Leaders need to ensure staff have the expertise they need to implement curriculum plans effectively and meet the needs of all pupils. This will ensure that pupils, including those with SEND can access the same curriculum as others, and learn strategies to increasingly manage their own behaviours.
- Leaders have not been effective in tackling weaknesses in the school. As a result, these weaknesses persist. Leaders need to ensure they rigorously and frequently monitor the impact of their actions to bring about demonstrable improvement in the quality of provision, including for pupils with SEND.

Leaders and those responsible for governance may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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	109477
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10242092
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pauline Duncombe
Headteacher	Ben Bardell
Website	www.laburnumprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Laburnum Primary School has become a primary school since the last inspection, having previously been a lower school. It now provides education for pupils from Nursery to Year 6.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and design and technology. 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.
- An inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum in personal, social and health education.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, early years leader, three governors and a local authority school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, including the minutes of the meetings of the governing body and monitoring notes from the local authority.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with leaders to scrutinise records and review the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also used discussions with pupils, staff and governors to evaluate the culture of safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses and free-text comments to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, along with the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for pupils and staff. Inspectors also spoke with a number of parents in the playground.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Jones

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