

Inspection of Livingstone Primary School

Clapham Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK41 7LG

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Livingstone Primary is a 'rainbow school'. Pupils choose one of four colours for their school sweatshirt. This signifies the diversity of the school community and the fact that, as pupils say, 'It's great to be different.'

There is a strong culture of respect. New arrivals are welcomed quickly into this inclusive school. Pupils' well-being is a priority from the moment they start. There are opportunities for calm reflection around the school and pupils know they can go to a member of the nurture team if they need a boost.

Pupils listen well in class and learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils who struggle to meet adults' expectations for behaviour get the help they need to improve. Pupils are happy, whether learning or playing. They feel safe and trust the adults to look after them. Bullying rarely happens.

All pupils do their best to demonstrate the school's motto, 'Work hard, be kind'. They follow the example set by staff, who model the positive behaviours and attitudes expected from pupils. Most pupils achieve well, sometimes from low starting points. Their achievements are celebrated and they are motivated to do well by a clear system of rewards and recognition.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum with their pupils' needs in mind. Many pupils come from other countries, sometimes mid-year. Some speak little or no English on arrival. Their previous experiences of education are varied. The curriculum breaks down the learning in each subject into manageable chunks. These are carefully ordered, so that pupils build their knowledge gradually.

Teachers are skilled at making the curriculum accessible to all pupils. Lessons are often hands-on and practical. Vocabulary and communication skills are prioritised. This is particularly true in the early years, where children get off to a great start. They learn the language they will need for the next stage of their learning. They settle into the routines and expectations of school quickly. They listen, follow instructions and get along well with each other.

Teachers explain things clearly. They revisit concepts regularly, so that pupils can consolidate their learning and remember it well. Teachers check pupils' understanding in a variety of ways. They adjust their teaching if necessary. When pupils need extra help, teachers put this in place quickly. Teachers give pupils feedback that helps them to improve. Most of the time this helps pupils to move on with their learning. Occasionally, teachers do not give pupils the most effective support to improve their work, so pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

While many pupils achieve well, leaders are continuing to act to improve pupils' learning. Leaders are rightly proud of the progress pupils make, from their different starting points.

Leaders make sure that reading is a priority. They have developed a book-based curriculum. High-quality texts support pupils' learning from the early years to Year 6. Phonics sessions start soon after pupils join the Reception class. These are structured so that pupils learn new sounds systematically. However, some teachers do not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to hear and repeat new sounds. Where this happens, it slows pupils' learning. The books pupils take home contain only the sounds they have learned. This means they can read with confidence and growing fluency.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early. Leaders support teachers to put the right provision in place for these pupils. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to meet pupils' needs. They set targets for pupils in carefully thought out plans. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as others and achieve well.

The school's programme of personal development is exceptionally well developed. On 'Dress as your future job day' pupils came to school as a doctor, an architect and a formula one racing driver. Pupils love to get a positive phone call home, in recognition of their efforts and achievements. Older pupils develop character through being sports or digital leaders. Inspirational speakers from the local area come to school council meetings. All pupils relish the exciting trips they go on. These are carefully planned to take them beyond the realm of their everyday experiences.

Governors visit the school often. This gives them a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to improve. They provide leaders with an appropriate balance of support and challenge. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate leaders' support for their well-being and the focus on developing their skills to provide the best possible experiences for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff understand their duty to keep pupils safe. Staff are alert to the signs that a pupil may be at risk. They know about the vulnerabilities of some members of the school community. There is a clear process for reporting concerns. This is understood and used effectively by everyone. Leaders carry out the necessary checks on adults who come into school to work with pupils to ensure pupils are safe.

Pupils have a good understanding of online safety. They learn about ways to keep themselves safe and know to talk to an adult if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In phonics lessons, pupils do not always get sufficient opportunities to orally rehearse the new sounds they are learning, with clear modelling from adults. This means that they do not develop a secure knowledge of the sounds they need to learn as quickly as they could. Leaders should ensure teachers share good practice and develop a precise and consistently effective approach to the teaching of phonics, so that all pupils gain reading accuracy and fluency quickly.
- The quality of feedback and support staff give to pupils is inconsistent. Where this happens, mistakes are not corrected meaning pupils do not always learn as much as they could. Leaders should ensure their own feedback to teachers following monitoring activities is acted on, so that all pupils achieve their potential across all subjects.

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	109432
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10241557
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	433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Roger Stokes
Headteacher	Peter Thornes
Website	www.livingstoneprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on the school roll has increased significantly since the last inspection.
- At the time of the inspection school leaders were not making use of any alternative provision.
- There is before- and after-school childcare, run and managed by school leaders.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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, art, physical education (PE) and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of

their work. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at a sample of English and topic books from all year groups.

- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders to review records. An inspector scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan, external reviews of the school and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority to discuss their work with the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from different year groups during lessons and at lunchtime. There were no responses to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire.
- To gather parents’ views, inspectors reviewed the 69 responses and 48 free-text responses submitted to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors gathered the views of staff by speaking with many of them and reviewing the 39 responses to Ofsted’s questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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