

Inspection of Luton Primary School

Luton Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 5AW

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in this nurturing school. Leaders are determined that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, achieve well and can succeed. The school's aim to provide 'A bridge to learning, perseverance and success' is lived out each day.

Leaders and staff work together well to make sure that pupils adopt positive learning habits, right from the start of nursery. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive helpful support to access the same learning as other pupils. All pupils develop their independence and knowledge well as they progress through the school.

Relationships are very positive. Pupils enjoy the friendships they make. They respect and value the kind, caring staff in the school. Pupils trust staff to help them with any problems and deal with the occasional behavioural issues that occur. The school is a calm, respectful and well-ordered place.

Pupils have many opportunities to grow and develop as responsible young people. They have impressively mature attitudes. Pupils enjoy debating current issues such as faith and equality. They are proud ambassadors of their 'rights respecting school'. Pupils take action to improve their environment and to support local good causes.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum that pupils are taught. Nearly all subjects have been planned in logical, sequential steps. This starts in early years where children gradually develop their understanding and social skills. Subject leaders identify the important knowledge and vocabulary for pupils to learn. They make sure that pupils increase their understanding over time. However, a small minority of foundation subjects are not yet planned with the same degree of precision.

Staff use their strong knowledge to choose engaging activities that support pupils' learning. They check regularly that pupils have understood what they are taught. Pupils rightly say that they have great teachers who make lessons interesting. Staff are adept at making the curriculum accessible for pupils with SEND and for those who speak English as an additional language. Most pupils achieve well by the time they reach the end of key stage 2. In the strongest subjects, pupils remember and apply their learning confidently. However, in a few subjects, pupils do not retain enough of their learning.

Learning to read fluently is very important here. The new phonics programme is now well established. Skilled staff teach pupils to identify sounds, read and spell words from the start of early years. They make sure pupils read books at the right level. Nonetheless, reading is still difficult for some pupils. Staff spot this quickly and make sure that they get extra help. In the past, not enough pupils were fluent readers by

the time they left key stage 1. The improvements that leaders have made to reading mean that pupils' achievement is now improving.

Nearly all pupils behave well. Staff have consistently high expectations of how pupils conduct themselves. In early years, children develop good attitudes toward learning. They share actively and play together harmoniously. During lessons, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are keen and engaged. Staff support pupils whose attention occasionally drifts to refocus on their learning. However, a small minority of pupils, some with SEND, find it hard to behave well. Skilled pastoral staff support these pupils appropriately. Leaders are determined that the school helps pupils to overcome behavioural difficulties. This means that pupils are starting to improve their conduct.

Since the pandemic, pupils' attendance has not been high enough. Despite leaders' best efforts, too many pupils regularly miss school. This has a negative impact on their learning and achievement.

Pupils' personal development is a strength. Leaders have carefully considered the wider experiences that pupils should have outside the classroom. Pupils attend a range of clubs and activities which help to develop their talents. They enjoy trips and visits such as the ballet at The Royal Opera House. Many pupils take on leadership responsibilities such as 'Playground Pals'. Pupils rightly feel that these meaningful roles make a difference to their school community. They know that staff are interested in their views.

Staff, including those new to the profession, are well motivated and proud to work at the school. Staff say that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload. Leaders make sure that staff have regular, high-quality training. Governors offer support to leaders and understand the school's context well. Many parents endorse the work of the school. One parent summing up the view of most said, 'The school have been very supportive and helpful. If there are any issues, the school deals with them properly, quickly and professionally.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff receive appropriate and regular training on how to keep pupils safe. Staff are confident in identifying and reporting any concerns that they have about a child. School leaders follow up on all concerns tenaciously. The school works closely with outside agencies to get the help that pupils and families need.

Leaders ensure that they carry out necessary checks on staff and volunteers before they start working at the school. Governors also monitor safeguarding processes.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils learn about managing potential risks they may face in the local area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A significant minority of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. These pupils miss vital learning which has a negative impact on their achievement. Leaders should continue to identify and implement the most effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance.
- In a few subjects, the curriculum is not planned with the same degree of precision as in the strongest subjects. Pupils achieve less well in these subjects because the important learning has not been clearly identified and taught. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are planned and delivered as well as the strongest.

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	118318
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10268179
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	665
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carolyn Gilmore
Headteacher	Karen Major
Website	www.lutonprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 September 2017

Information about this school

- Luton Junior School amalgamated with Luton Infant School in 2020 to become Luton Primary School.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2020.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school currently uses two alternative provisions.
- The school runs its own nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other school leaders and staff in school.
- The lead inspector met with three local governors.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspectors talked to leaders from the two alternative provisions.
- The inspectors undertook deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, geography, art and design and religious education. They also looked more widely at foundation subjects. Inspectors met with subject leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. They reviewed planning, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspectors spoke to leaders about curriculum development in personal, social and health education, and wider personal development.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. The inspectors considered how well the school manages safer recruitment and how it manages allegations against adults.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan and local governing body meeting minutes.
- The inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and other activities in school, what behaviour is like and whether they feel safe.
- The inspectors spent time with pupils during playtime and lunchtime. They also talked to pupils in the breakfast club.
- The inspectors spoke to parents at the gate and considered the 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also considered the 59 staff survey responses and the 15 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Maria Roberts, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Martin Hacker	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Reece	His Majesty's Inspector

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