

Inspection of Loose Primary School

Loose Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9UW

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

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

Ofsted has not previously inspected Loose Primary School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school, describing it as 'a wonderful place where we trust our teachers to help us if we are worried or sad'. There are many opportunities for pupils to work with local artists, entering local art and design competitions. They sing in choirs and compete in sporting events such as Boccia, cricket and hockey. Older pupils begin to consider their next steps in education and careers as they visit a local secondary school for science lessons.

Behaviour in and around school is calm and purposeful. Routines for pupils' future learning habits are established early in the inspiring early years environment. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mature. They respect teachers and apply themselves conscientiously in lessons. The new headteacher has introduced a more positive and inclusive behaviour policy based on the school values of compassion, determination, trust, respect and pride. Pupils recognise this as a fairer approach.

The school motto 'potential is limitless' runs through every aspect of this school, echoing leaders' high expectations. Pupils already attain well, but leaders are aspirational for every pupil, no matter their barriers to learning, to make excellent progress.

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

Children get off to an excellent start in the early years. Teachers skilfully blend children's individual interests and needs with knowing how learning needs to develop over time. Children are frequently engrossed in activities indoors and in the outdoor environment. There is a strong focus on communication and language through reading stories and singing songs, as adults expertly interact with children and model new vocabulary. Children make strong progress in Reception and are very well prepared for the curriculum in Year 1.

The curriculum is ambitious and coherently planned. Some subjects, such as physical education and art, are well developed, and pupils attain highly. They can discuss in detail what they have learned. Leaders are determined that every subject will be of the same high standard. They have recently introduced new programmes which help teachers to know precisely what they must teach so that pupils build their learning securely in logical steps. In these newer areas of the curriculum, knowledge is not yet securely embedded in pupils' long-term memories.

Teachers have strong knowledge in the more established subjects. They are well supported by specialist teachers and subject leaders to break the curriculum down into smaller steps so that all pupils can attain well. Leaders have recently provided training for all staff, to further develop their practice in adapting the curriculum. This is so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, attain as well as they possibly can.

Leaders ensure that teachers receive focused professional development. They are currently working with teachers to enhance their skills in planning activities to help pupils understand and remember key curriculum knowledge and vocabulary. This is to enable pupils to build new learning more securely.

Leaders have created a culture where pupils love reading. The early years is full of high-quality books. Reading is taught consistently well as children learn increasingly complex sounds in words which they practise writing from an early stage. Staff are trained to teach reading and support pupils effectively to keep up. These pupils benefit from additional small group or one-to-one tutoring, as well as more frequent opportunities to read to adults. Staff use regular assessment to diagnose precisely which sounds pupils need to revisit and ensure that the books they read give them accurately targeted practice. Teachers read to pupils daily from a diverse range of stories and poems. Pupils love class reading time, excitedly discussing the wide range of books their teachers have read to them.

Pupils learn how to be responsible citizens and are proud of their elected roles such as eco-councillors, reading leaders and play leaders. There are a wide range of extra-curricular clubs such as netball, choir and dance. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures through the curriculum and assemblies. They are emphatic that everyone has an equal right to be treated respectfully and fairly, saying, 'Even if I don't really believe the same thing, I will still show respect.'

Trustees and the local governing body are highly ambitious that every pupil will reach their full potential. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development. Trustees provide effective support and challenge for senior leaders and carry out their statutory duties well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance based on the recognition that 'it could happen here'. All staff know the signs of abuse or neglect and that any concern must be reported to a safeguarding leader and recorded. Leaders follow up on concerns quickly, making sure pupils get help, even when this involves challenging outside agencies for support. Staff get feedback from leaders, so they know their concerns are being acted on and are given regular reminders and updates through briefings.

Pupils feel safe in school. They say they will talk to a teacher if they have concerns, including online concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculums have only recently been further developed so that teachers know precisely what must be taught and when. Pupils' recall in these subjects is

not yet as strong as it could be. Leaders should continue to embed teachers' practice in these subjects so that all pupils understand new learning and commit it to long-term memory.

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	146143
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10267989
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	655
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Carole Hardy
Headteacher	Trevor North
Website	www.loose-primary.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 April 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Loose Primary School is larger than the average-size primary school.
- The school has been part of the Coppice Primary Partnership multi-academy-trust since September 2018.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2023.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, physical education, art and science. For each deep dive, they 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. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about assessment, teaching expertise and leadership development.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the chief executive officer, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted's online surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding through scrutinising safeguarding records and discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records and behaviour incident logs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Clarke	His Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Cottingham	Ofsted Inspector
Leah Morgan	Ofsted Inspector

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