

Inspection of Longden C of E Primary School

Plealey Lane, Longden, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 8EX

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite, happy and safe at this welcoming school. They enjoy learning and are proud of their achievements. For example, they talk confidently about how they learn to play a range of musical instruments and perform regular concerts in the community.

Relationships are a strength of the school. Older pupils organise and play games with younger children at playtimes. Older pupils are seen and act as role models. Similarly, adults care about pupils. All staff are well trained in supporting pupils' mental health, so pupils feel assured that there is always someone to talk to if they are worried. Pupils behave well and say both bullying and disruptive behaviour are rare. One pupil said, 'The biggest rule of the school is no bullying. We just won't have it.'

The school has raised the expectations of what pupils can achieve. Leaders have acted quickly to put in place a curriculum that is ambitious and reflects the national curriculum. Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. However, this is not the case in all subjects. The curriculum does not yet identify precisely what pupils need to know and this means that pupils do not learn what leaders expect.

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

In a short space of time, new leaders have rapidly improved the school's curriculum. There is now a formal curriculum in place for all subjects. New subject leaders have been appointed and there is a shared drive to improve the school. Leaders have quickly identified areas that needed strengthening and put actions in place to do this. For example, all staff have been retrained in the school's phonics approach in order to ensure that the scheme is followed carefully. The teaching of English and mathematics has developed because staff are now clear about what they should teach and when. Expectations have been raised and this means pupils' outcomes are improving.

In other subjects, the curriculum is less developed. Leaders are still in the process of identifying the precise knowledge that they want the pupils to know and remember. Teaching does not always build on what pupils can already do or address gaps in their knowledge. While staff are developing strong assessment systems in English and mathematics, these are underdeveloped in other subjects. Teachers do not systematically check what pupils can and cannot do. This means gaps and misconceptions remain unchecked.

Leaders have worked hard to develop the culture of reading across the school. They have carefully mapped out the stories that they want the pupils to know and love. Pupils value story time. Phonics is taught well. Skilled staff address misconceptions and ensure support is put in place for any pupil who needs additional practice. Most pupils make a prompt start learning to read. However, children in early years do not start learning their sounds quickly enough.

The nursery is a hive of activity. The youngest children are curious and settle into school quickly. Relationships across early years are strong and children learn how to interact well with both adults and their friends. However, the curriculum in the early years lacks precision for some children. It is not clear what the children should learn and when. Activities do not have a clear intent, which means opportunities are missed to develop children's knowledge and skills.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Their needs are identified and skilled staff ensure that the most appropriate support is quickly put in place. Pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school and achieve well.

New leaders have significantly improved attendance. They have worked with parents and carers to ensure that they understand the importance of pupils being in school regularly. As a result, the number of pupils who regularly miss school has declined significantly.

The school's values of 'share, care and be fair' come through all aspects of school life. While this is a Church of England school, pupils know and understand about other faiths and beliefs. Pupils value the opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as being school councillors and organising charity events.

Governors are skilled and carry out their duties well. They have an accurate view of the school and this enables them to effectively hold leaders to account. Staff are proud to work in the school. They are positive about the recent changes and appreciate how workload has been well managed.

Additionally, parents are overwhelmingly positive. They appreciate the strong communication and feel they understand and appreciate the changes that are taking place.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics is not coherently planned and sequenced and leaders are at an early stage of identifying the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn. This means that pupils do not develop a deep enough understanding and do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that pupils' learning in all subjects is well sequenced so that teaching helps pupils to know and remember more over time.

- The use of assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is at an early stage of development. This means that teachers and subject leaders are not clear about what pupils understand and remember, or what gaps in learning pupils have. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and use this information to plan next steps in learning.
- The early years curriculum does not identify and order the precise knowledge and skills that children need to know across the whole early years phase. As a result, learning does not support children to build their knowledge and skills systematically over time well enough. Leaders should ensure that the early years curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced from Nursery to Reception so that children are prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Children in early years do not make a quick enough start in learning to read. This means children do not progress as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that children in Reception make a quicker start learning to read.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	123546
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10256911
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Monaghan
Headteacher	Sally Johnson
Website	www.longden.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and special needs coordinator have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school has a Nursery class that caters for two-year-old children.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school runs an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the senior leadership team to discuss school development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspectors met with a group of governors and examined records of governors' meetings.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local authority and the Diocese of Hereford.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were also considered, including through Ofsted's surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Steer

Ofsted Inspector

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