

Inspection of a good school: Longtown Community Primary School

Longtown, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 0LE

Inspection date: 11 April 2024

Outcome

Longtown Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school regularly. They enjoy their subjects and, in some cases, wish they had more time to study them. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Texts are carefully selected to match with pupils' studies in other subjects, such as science and geography. They also draw on the farming background of many pupils.

The school wants all pupils to do well. The mantra is, 'Everyone strives to be their very best'. This is particularly achieved in phonics, where all pupils in Year 1 achieve well.

The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are a significant strength. Pupils are kind and respectful to each other, and enthusiastic in their learning. They ask enquiring questions from an early age. Pupils feel safe in school and know there is always someone to talk to.

The school makes full use of its Olchon Valley environment in the shadow of the Black Mountains. This includes making use of the local outdoor centre. The school provides pupils with wider experiences that contrast with its rural location. To experience more diverse settings, pupils travel to the city of Cardiff, where they visit a mosque and a synagogue.

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

The school has put in place an ambitious curriculum that seeks to give pupils experiences of the local community and the world beyond. The world map on display in the school hall is peppered with examples of curriculum links to different countries, including Bangladesh and Nepal.

For each subject, the school has identified the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary it wants pupils to learn. It has thought carefully about how to deliver a two-year cycle and, in some instances, a three-year cycle to take account of mixed-age classes. Curriculum content is successfully sequenced to recap pupils' learning and revisit themes in greater depth. This can be seen, for example, in studies of the United Kingdom in geography. This

work builds on children's experiences in the early years. In Reception, children create maps of their journey to Longtown Castle. They construct a representation of the Black Mountains in the sand tray, containing a water channel for the River Wye. All the time they use correct geographical vocabulary.

Children get off to a rapid start learning to read through the phonics programme when they join Reception. The programme is delivered consistently well. For the occasional pupil who falls behind, or finds reading difficult, the school quickly intervenes with additional support to ensure they keep up. This means that all pupils gain the knowledge and skills to read confidently and fluently.

Enquiry work and problem-solving are at the heart of the science curriculum, including in the early years where children explore the growth from tadpole to frog and from seed to bean. Science is sequenced well so that pupils' knowledge builds over time. Teachers make intentional links between subjects, which help deepen pupils' understanding. For instance, they overlap learning about plant growth in science with a geography topic on crops in Kenya.

The curriculum is adapted well to take account of the needs of the small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers make many and varied checks on how pupils are doing. Assessment tasks are adapted well to support pupils who may struggle with writing. This enables teachers to quickly identify any gaps or misconceptions to be addressed. A few curriculum subjects are not as well embedded and pupils' learning is less successful. The school's checks on how well pupils are getting on in these subjects are less well developed.

The school has worked successfully to improve the rate of pupils' attendance. Consequently, very few pupils are persistently absent. Overall attendance compares favourably with the national picture. The school has strengthened its relationships with parents and carers to achieve this. A high number of parents responded to Ofsted's survey. Almost all said they would recommend the school to another parent.

Pupils have numerous opportunities for activities to enhance their personal development, including archery, rock climbing, surfing, a radio club and charity events. They can also take on roles, such as becoming a prefect, sports leader, librarian or a member of the environmental committee.

Leaders are highly mindful of reducing staff's workload, especially in a very small school where all staff take on additional roles. Staff are highly appreciative of this. Governors in turn prioritise the well-being of the headteacher, recognising the additional demands of leading a small school. They bring significant expertise and experience to their role and also help out as volunteers for clubs or hearing pupils read.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few foundation subjects are not as well embedded as others. In addition, the school's checks on the implementation of these subjects are less well developed. As a result, the impact on pupils' learning is not as successful as it could be. The school should ensure that the curriculum for all subjects is implemented effectively so that pupils achieve consistently well across all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2014.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	116705
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10294518
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kym Wilcocks
Headteacher	Jane Barnes (acting head of school)
Website	www.longtown.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The previous head of school left in December 2023. The current acting head of school has been in post since January 2023. The post is part time, three days a week.
- The chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2023.
- There are four classes in the school. Three of these are mixed-age classes for pupils from Years 1 to 6.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The 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 executive headteacher, the acting head of school, senior teachers and other staff.

- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils.
- An inspector met two members of the governing body, including the chair.
- An inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service, the online questionnaire and the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography 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.
- Inspectors also listened to pupils read and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including in the early years foundation stage.
- 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.

Mark Sims, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Parr

Ofsted Inspector

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