Inspection of Long Mead Community Primary School

Waveney Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 3JU

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 April 2025
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning at this caring community school. They work hard in lessons and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils have positive relationships with staff. This helps them to behave well. Staff ensure that those pupils who need support to regulate their emotions have the help they need. As a result, the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils are happy and safe. They know staff will address any concerns they have.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. However, the school's work to address previous weaknesses in the curriculum is not yet fully embedded. As a result, pupils still have gaps in their knowledge, and they do not recall their prior learning well enough. This means that they cannot apply the skills and knowledge they learn consistently well.

All pupils have opportunities to develop their talents. They participate happily in the broad range of clubs which the school offers. These are as varied as coding and rugby. Staff empower pupils to request and plan additional clubs that interest them. The school ensures that every pupil has an opportunity to represent the school in sports such as football or boccia. Pupils also participate in various musical performances. They enjoy these opportunities.

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

The school has been through a period of significant change since its previous inspection. The new governing body has worked quickly to build a strong understanding of the school. This has allowed it to identify key areas of school improvement accurately. The school has rightly prioritised this work. Staff receive high-quality training, and this helps them to undertake their work effectively.

Staff have been sharply focused in their work to improve the curriculum. The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that begins in the early years and meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers have clearly identified the skills and knowledge that pupils need to learn. However, this work is relatively new. This means that pupils do not have secure prior learning to build on to achieve as well as they should.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They explain learning clearly. Staff in early years model language accurately. This helps children to improve their skills of communication swiftly. The checks on pupils' understanding are generally effective and help staff to identify and address gaps in knowledge quickly. Staff design a range of well-planned support to help pupils who fall behind to catch up. However, in a small number of lessons the teaching activities that teachers select are not designed well enough to support pupils to learn effectively. As a result, some pupils do not deepen their understanding as well as they could.

Staff identify pupils' barriers to learning quickly. This includes the large number of pupils who join during the school year. This helps staff to identify the needs of pupils accurately, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff use this

information to plan careful adaptations to learning. A small number of pupils follow personalised programmes matched to their needs. As a result, pupils with SEND generally learn the skills and knowledge they need. They achieve well against their personal targets.

The school prioritises reading. This starts in early years where children enjoy choosing bedtime stories to share with parents. Older pupils read widely. They recall the books they read and discuss them excitedly. However, the teaching of phonics is not always as accurate as it should be. As a result, some pupils do not become fluent readers quickly enough. Some of the books that pupils read are not matched closely enough to the sounds and letters they know. This means that pupils sometimes rely on inaccurate guess work when practising their reading.

Children in early years enjoy a positive start. They learn key concepts and communicate them clearly. Most children in early years are ready for Year 1. Many older pupils are well prepared for secondary school. However, some pupils across the school do not reach expected levels in writing. Some cannot apply their mathematical knowledge well enough.

Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other. This is evident in calm and happy breaktimes. Pupils enjoy attending school. Those pupils who need additional help to attend receive high-quality support. Strategies such as use of the school minibus to collect pupils are very effective. As a result, attendance is notably improving.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have mature attitudes to diversity and consider views that differ to their own sensitively. The school ensures pupils enjoy a range of rich and engaging experiences. For example, pupils visit local schools to participate in a reading project. Pupils become active citizens through the leadership roles they hold. These include setting up the school hall for assemblies or acting as reading buddies to younger pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's work to design an ambitious and well-implemented curriculum is still a work in progress. This means that pupils do not routinely achieve as well as they should across the subjects. The school should embed the new curriculum securely so that pupils gain strong knowledge across the subjects.
- The teaching of phonics is not yet consistently effective and the books that pupils read are not matched closely enough to the sounds and letters they know. As a result, some pupils do not become confident readers quickly enough. The school must ensure that

the teaching of phonics is consistently effective and that pupils read books matched to their phonics knowledge.

- In a small number of subjects, the activities selected by teachers are not designed carefully enough. As a result, pupils do not always deepen their understanding of the curriculum as deeply as they could. The school must ensure that the activities that teachers design support pupils in consistently developing skills and subject-specific vocabulary effectively.

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	118575
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10396731
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134 (22 in Nursery)
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Prideaux
Headteacher	Karen Follows
Website	www.long-mead.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school's headteacher and senior leadership team have changed since the previous inspection.
- The school manages breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

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

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher as well as with other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also held a conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- 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

Gavin Thomas, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Oliver Allen	Ofsted Inspector

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