

Inspection of an outstanding school: Loose Primary School

Loose Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9UW

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 April 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this friendly, welcoming school. They speak very positively about it. As one pupil stated, 'This is a very caring school. If you need support, there is always someone to help you.' Leaders' ambition is to create an environment where 'potential is limitless' and all pupils thrive. Leaders aspire for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve highly. However, leaders rightly recognise that there is still work to do to achieve this in all subjects.

Pupils behave well. They are calm, focused and engaged in lessons. When taking part in discussions, pupils listen and respond well to each other. They are polite and well mannered to each other and to adults. Bullying is not tolerated. On the rare occasions that bullying happens, adults deal with it quickly.

Pupils value opportunities to contribute to their school and the local community. Year 6 pupils enjoy being buddies to Reception children. As one Year 6 pupil stated, 'We help the Reception children get to know the school and make sure they have someone to talk to if they are worried.' Also, the eco-council is particularly proud of improving local car parking through their work with a community traffic officer.

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

Leaders have designed a broad, ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, they have identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to remember right from the start of Reception. In some subjects, for example mathematics and history, a clear sequence of learning builds over time. This means that all pupils, including those with SEND, make connections between topics and remember their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 could explain how problems caused by rapid urbanisation during the Industrial Revolution led to improvements in hygiene and sanitation.

However, the curriculum is not as well developed in some foundation subjects. Leaders are in the process of refining the sequence of knowledge that pupils need to learn in these subjects. Leaders recognise what they need to do to ensure that all pupils can achieve consistently highly in all curriculum subjects.

Leaders prioritise reading. They are ambitious for all pupils to read fluently and with comprehension. Children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 learn phonics through a well-organised programme. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read, read books containing the phonic sounds that they know. In Reception, teachers also plan highly effective activities to build children's vocabulary and understanding of language. In Year 2, however, there is some variability in how well pupils are taught to read. This is because teachers do not always match reading materials accurately to pupils' phonic knowledge. This means that some pupils in Year 2 do not develop fluency and confidence in reading as well as they could.

The school's provision for pupils' wider development is strong. All pupils can take part in a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs, including those for cricket, multisports, recorder, choir and film. Pupils experience a range of trips, including to the local church and museums, and have a camping experience in Year 6. Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to showcase their talents. They are particularly proud of the 'Loose Gets Lively' arts event, which aims to celebrate the diversity of talent in the school. The choir has recently taken part in a choral performance at the O2 Arena in London. Pupils are also encouraged to take part in competitions, for example in sport and in music.

Staff teach pupils to care for others. Pupils have raised money for local charities, such as the local air ambulance, and have invited care-home residents into school to watch a Nativity performance. Pupils also get out and about in their locality, taking part in litter-picking in the park and planting trees in a nearby woodland.

Leaders, trustees and governors have a clear, shared vision for the school. Leaders want all pupils to access a broad and varied curriculum. Leaders have planned a programme of high-quality staff training to develop teachers' subject knowledge in all subjects. Staff feel valued. They are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Staff say that leaders are approachable and mindful of their well-being and workload. Leaders ensure that staff have the time to focus on the aspects of their work that have the most impact on pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. Record-keeping is thorough and systematic. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. Highly effective policies ensure that all adults know what to do to keep children safe. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the help and support they need quickly.

Pupils feel safe in school. Teachers teach them how to keep safe and where to go for help if they need it. Pupils have a clear, age-appropriate knowledge of how to keep themselves safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some foundation subjects is not planned effectively. Series of lessons in these subjects do not enable pupils to make links between concepts securely enough so that they build their knowledge systematically. Leaders need to continue to review and refine the curriculum so that, across the school, sequences of lessons contribute well to delivering the curriculum intent in all subjects.
- Early reading is taught effectively overall, but there are some inconsistencies in Year 2. This includes how well reading materials are at times matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. This means that some pupils struggle to read fluently. Leaders should ensure that these inconsistencies are ironed out, so that all pupils achieve as well as they can in their reading.

Background

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

This was the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Loose Primary School, to be outstanding in November 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	10229069
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	Carol Hardy
Headteacher	Sarah Holman
Website	www.loose-primary.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Loose Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It is part of the Coppice Primary Partnership multi-academy trust.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and trust leader have all been appointed since September 2019.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 met with senior leaders, trust leaders, two trustees (including the chair of trustees) and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders,

looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and interviewing staff and through discussions with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents and carers through the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Sue Keeling, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Appleby

Ofsted Inspector

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