

Inspection of a good school: Linslade Lower School

Leopold Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 2QU

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 January 2022

Outcome

Linslade Lower School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They grow into confident, resilient and kind young people because of the nurturing and welcoming environment at Linslade Lower School. Pupils say people should try to be 'honest' and 'respectful' and say it is always important 'to be yourself'.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and focused during lessons and at breaktimes. Pupils say they feel safe and that bullying, although it rarely happens, is dealt with effectively by adults.

Pupils across the school enjoy reading and listening to stories. Most pupils learn to read fluently and with expression. Those who have fallen behind are supported to catch up quickly. Pupils who sometimes find learning difficult, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive appropriate support to help them access the curriculum alongside their classmates.

Pupils enjoy an exciting curriculum that they talk about with enthusiasm and passion.

Parents use words such as 'amazing', 'incredible' and 'fantastic' to describe the school and its staff. One parent's comments were echoed by many when they said, 'Linslade Lower provides a nurturing, supportive, inclusive learning environment that advances both my child's academic and wider personal education. A fantastic school!'

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

Leaders understand the school community. They have considered the important things they want pupils to know and to be able to do by the time they leave the school. They have embedded a curriculum that ensures that pupils experience a good quality of education.

Children in early years develop a love of stories and reading as soon as they start school. Very skilled adults know how to extend children's vocabulary and knowledge through play and purposeful interaction. In key stage 1, pupils continue to build on their vocabulary in

their phonics sessions. Teachers help pupils practise their new sounds across curriculum subjects. For example, in Year 1, pupils learn sounds that link to words relating to their history topic. As a result, pupils across the school gain a wide range of vocabulary.

Leaders have prioritised learning in significant aspects of English and mathematics. This is making sure that pupils who have been most affected by the pandemic catch up on the important knowledge and skills they need in mathematics and writing. Pupils build on their knowledge and skills in mathematics and English as they move through the school. By the time they reach Year 4, most pupils can choose from a range of strategies in mathematics and English to help them apply their learning in more complex ways. However, in some year groups, a few pupils do not receive enough opportunities to practise their writing skills so that they are as secure as their peers in these strategies.

In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils talk about their learning over time with great enthusiasm. Their knowledge of geography has deepened through their studies of the rainforest in Australia, and through a local study. Most pupils spoken with confidently ordered significant events over time. Some pupils are not as confident in the subject-specific skills they have been taught, such as the importance of historical texts and what can be learned from artefacts or people from the past, today.

Support for pupils with SEND is strong. Pupils enjoy their learning and enjoy attending school. Leaders ensure that adults are well trained to deliver the emotional and academic support pupils need to achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is a vital aspect of the curriculum and school life. Diversity, compassion and empathy are core values that pupils learn through the wide range of texts they study. Pupils learn about different faiths, learn to respect differences, and learn about the issues surrounding gender stereotyping and discrimination.

Staff, governors and parents are proud to be part of this school community. Parents praise staff particularly for the support during periods of national lockdown and school closure. Governors visit the school routinely so that they can check leaders' actions and challenge and support leaders effectively.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that making sure that all the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn are taught and learned across all year groups may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Appropriate safeguarding checks on staff and visitors to the school are completed. Staff are vigilant. Leaders follow up concerns swiftly. Staff are aware of the latest safeguarding updates and know what signs to look out for. Staff are adept at spotting when pupils are not okay and take swift and appropriate action to help them. Staff and leaders make sure that the most vulnerable

pupils get the precise support from external agencies to remain safe, attend school and achieve as well as they can.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise writing skills in their writing over time. These pupils do not develop writing skills and strategies securely enough. Leaders should continue to ensure that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to apply what they have been taught, so that pupils can write more proficiently over time, across the curriculum.
- Some pupils' understanding of the specific skills required in some subjects is less well developed. Where this occurs, pupils are less confident in their learning. Teachers should deliver the curriculum so that pupils learn the skills associated with each subject as well as they learn the knowledge and information.

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 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 as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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	109515
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10200014
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Glasper
Headteacher	Hazel Farlam
Website	www.linsladelower.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Linslade Lower is an average-sized school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a very small number speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the senior leader who is also the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and teachers. The inspector held a meeting with six members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector took account of a wide range of information, including the school's improvement plans and records of safeguarding concerns. School policies, documents and records relating to safeguarding, including the single central record and minutes of governors' meetings, were scrutinised.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The inspector also reviewed attendance and other information provided by school leaders.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents expressed in 92 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and 90 free-text responses. The inspector also considered 18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 40 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. The inspector spoke with several parents at the end of day 2 of the inspection.
- The subjects covered in depth as part of this inspection were reading, mathematics and science. In each subject, the inspector spoke with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. The inspector visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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