

Inspection of an outstanding school: Little Melton Primary School

School Lane, Little Melton, Norwich, Norfolk NR9 3AD

Inspection date: 24 January 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Little Melton Primary. They speak with fondness and pride about their popular school and the adults who teach them. Many pupils develop a love of learning. They support each other as they work and persevere when faced with harder learning activities. However, due to some unevenness in how well the curriculum is taught, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. From the start of early years, pupils learn, and stick to, school routines. They generate a calm, orderly environment in which to learn and play. In lessons, pupils are keen to offer their thoughts about topics they are studying. Pupils are attentive when teachers or classmates are speaking to the class.

Pupils rarely experience bullying. They understand what bullying is and the hurt it can cause. Pupils know that staff act swiftly to solve any problems that may occur.

Pupils like that leaders provide them with plenty of things to do outside of lessons. Pupils learn leadership skills by taking on duties as house captains, language ambassadors and buddies. They develop a healthy sense of competition through house and sports events.

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

Leaders have drawn upon staff knowledge and wider subject-specific research to put in place an ambitious, thorough curriculum. Their work is underpinned by a commitment to provide pupils with the skills they need for life. Leaders have given careful thought to the order that pupils will learn content from early years through to Year 6. In one or two subjects, this work remains ongoing.

From the start of the early years, leaders make reading a central focus of pupils' learning. Teachers ensure pupils not only read the school's 'anchor' books but discuss them too. Knowledgeable staff teach reading with an enthusiasm that rubs off on pupils. Effective teaching and the school's 'starbooks' reward scheme motivate and enable most pupils to become keen, fluent readers. Pupils speak with eagerness and knowledge about the broad range of books they read.

Teachers deliver phonics well. Teachers give pupils lots of chances to practise the sounds they learn. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that match the sounds they know. Leaders and teachers are quick to spot if any pupil falls behind. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who need extra help get plenty of precise support. On occasion, some adults do not choose the right strategies to help these pupils with their reading.

Teachers have played an important role in redesigning the curriculum. They have a strong knowledge of most subjects, and how to teach them to mixed age classes. Where this is the case, teachers deliver the curriculum well. They present facts and concepts clearly. Teachers also make sure pupils routinely revisit previous learning. Teachers check that pupils have a firm grasp of key facts before moving on to more demanding learning.

Not all teachers have finished getting to grips with how to deliver every subject of the redesigned curriculum in line with leaders' high expectations. At times, some teachers do not choose the most appropriate learning activities to enable pupils to practise what they have studied. Where this is the case, pupils do not make the progress that they could.

Leaders have a precise knowledge of the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders help teachers to provide these pupils with the right teaching and support to achieve well.

Leaders provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons and develop skills for life. The curriculum is enriched by carefully chosen visits, clubs and whole school events. Pupils say their time on a residential visit helped to boost their confidence and make new friends. Older pupils speak maturely about the topics they study in relationships education.

During a time of considerable curriculum change, the headteacher and governors have made sure that the school remains a welcoming, caring community. Parents, pupils and staff agree pupils are happy, safe and well behaved. Lessons flow smoothly. Pupils have fun at playtimes. One pupil summed up the sentiments of many in saying, 'We love coming to school.'

Staff are proud to work at Little Melton and consider leaders to be considerate of their workload. Together, they have sustained the effective teamwork noted at the time of the previous inspection.

The governing body carries out its duties effectively. Governors carefully evaluate school leaders' work to improve the school. In doing so, governors seek external validation of leaders' actions, such as the changes to the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have instilled a deep safeguarding culture. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Leaders carry out checks to ensure that adults' knowledge of safeguarding, including how to report concerns, is up to date.

Leaders take apt and timely action when they are alerted to a potential safeguarding concern about a pupil. Where appropriate, leaders seek guidance and support from suitable expert external agencies.

Pupils are taught and remember strategies to stay safe. For example, pupils recall important messages about how to stay safe online.

Governors make sure that leaders carry out and record necessary checks on adults who work with pupils at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, some adults do not choose the most appropriate strategies to support pupils who need extra help with their reading. This can slow the speed at which a few pupils learn some sounds. Leaders should make sure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to provide pupils with high-quality support to learn to read.
- Leaders have drawn up a detailed and ambitious curriculum in each subject. In one or two subjects, some teachers are still getting to grips with how best to deliver the curriculum. This can slow pupils' progress in these subjects. Leaders should make sure that within a manageable timescale, all teachers develop a detailed knowledge of each subject's curriculum and how best to teach it.

Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2017.

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](#)' 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	120827
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10255136
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Lawrence
Headteacher	Alex Pritchard
Website	www.littlemeltonprimaryschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	28 and 29 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Little Melton Primary is a smaller-than-average-size primary school.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- In order to judge whether the school continues to be outstanding, inspectors undertook deep dives in geography, mathematics and reading. This involved meeting with senior and subject leaders, scrutinising curriculum planning and visiting lessons where pupils were learning these subjects. Inspectors met with pupils and looked at their work. Inspectors also spoke with teachers. An inspector heard children in different year groups read books.
- In addition, the lead inspector met with four representatives of the governing body and read minutes from several governor meetings.

- An inspector met with the school's special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors read a wide variety of school documents, including the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the results of Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors met pupils from several year groups to ask their views about the school, and what they feel it provides for them.
- Inspectors also observed pupils at play and lunchtimes.
- In order to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record and checked the school's procedures for the safer recruitment of staff. The lead inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with staff to check details of their safeguarding knowledge, training and the school's processes for reporting safeguarding concerns. Inspectors also checked samples of safeguarding records.

Inspection team

John Lucas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Oriana Dalton

Ofsted Inspector

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