

Inspection of a good school: Longcause Community Special School

Longcause, Plympton St Maurice, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 1JB

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 October 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this school and are proud to be part of it. The school creates an atmosphere that is calm and purposeful. Staff care deeply about each pupil. Pupils enjoy warm relationships with staff and receive exceptional support and guidance to overcome challenges. This enables pupils to grow in confidence and flourish in a safe environment. The school has high expectations of all pupils, and as a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils' behaviour is impressive. They understand what staff expect of them. Pupils accept each other's differences. They are supportive of each other during lessons and social times.

Pupils relish the rich and diverse range of opportunities the school offers. These help to develop pupils' skills and interests in many areas, such as music, theatre and outdoor education. Pupils of all ages and abilities are given these opportunities. This develops pupils' independence and prepares them well for the next stage of their lives.

Parents are thrilled with the school. Many credit the way staff support pupils and families. This creates a happy environment where pupils thrive.

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

The school is passionate and determined to provide pupils with the very best quality of education and care. Everything the school does is about helping pupils realise their potential. The curriculum is ambitious. It is constantly under review to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of each pupil. Pupils are eager to learn and show positive attitudes to their work. The emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics is evident to see. It provides pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to become independent

learners. For example, pupils learn to shop, read a bus timetable and follow recipes. Similarly, pupils acquire valuable knowledge and skills in a range of other subjects.

Throughout the school, there is a strong focus on communication. Staff use technology, signs and symbols to promote pupils' early communication skills. The school aims for every pupil to become a reader. Pupils benefit from highly effective phonics teaching across the school. Reading books precisely match the phonics knowledge of the pupils. The school ensures staff have the knowledge and expertise to teach phonics skilfully. Pupils read daily to improve their fluency and comprehension. The school selects texts with care to ensure that they are age- and stage-appropriate. Story time is a firm favourite with pupils. They hear stories every day, often linked to their learning in geography, history or science. Hearing stories develops pupils' love of reading.

Pupils' wider personal development is essential to the school's work. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is planned and sequenced with care. Pupils build knowledge to help them lead safe, active lives. For example, pupils learn how to ride a bike and swim. This builds their confidence and increases their independence.

Pupils are respectful and courteous. They greet visitors warmly into their classrooms. They recognise each other's differences and show tolerance when other pupils feel anxious or worried. The school deals with these moments with care and consideration to keep stress to a minimum.

The work the school undertakes to develop the talents and skills of pupils is impressive. There are numerous enrichment opportunities available to pupils. Pupils spoke with joy about residential trips, theatre visits and sporting activities. Older pupils talk proudly of their achievements within the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. These and other experiences develop pupils' resilience and self-esteem.

Pupils have high-quality and impartial careers guidance from a young age. Work experience is well considered to ensure it is linked to pupils' own interests, such as becoming a lifeguard or computing. This helps raise pupils' aspirations and identify potential careers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 January 2015.

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	113650
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10288140
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fred Jenkins
Headteacher	Anne Hutchinson
Website	www.longcausespecialschool.com
Date of previous inspection	26 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Longcause Community Special School caters for pupils with communication, interaction and cognition and learning difficulties.
- All pupils who attend have an education, health and care plan.
- The school currently does not have any children in the early years foundation stage.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, other staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and

PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils across the school read to an adult.
- The lead inspector spoke with the head of education from Plymouth local authority.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including school improvement plans and governors' minutes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The lead inspector met with school leaders to discuss and scrutinise how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies. Inspectors spoke with parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tonya Hill

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023