

# Inspection of a good school: Leechpool Primary School

Leechpool Lane, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 6AG

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Inspection dates:

28 February and 1 March 2023

## Outcome

Leechpool Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love being in this school. The school day starts with cheerful greetings between pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy chatting with their friends and giving Mabel, the school dog, a pat, as they hang up their coats and unpack their bags.

Pupils are keen to join in with the many activities and opportunities the school has to offer. They join in with singing assemblies with great enthusiasm, the sound of their voices filling the corridors. The school's extensive and highly popular range of clubs make an important contribution to the development of pupils' personal interests and skills. Many take part in sports competitions, representing their school with pride. Leaders make sure that all pupils are fully involved in school life, regardless of background or need. For instance, every Year 6 pupil will attend the residential trip this year.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. They want to do their best and work hard. Pupils know that their teachers have high expectations. They behave exceptionally well, listening carefully to their teachers and to each other during lessons. Pupils are kind to each other and respect adults. Leaders will not tolerate bullying. They respond quickly and effectively to any concerns raised.

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

The headteacher leads with warmth, compassion and good humour. Many parents and carers sing her praises, with comments such as: 'The headteacher is a fantastic leader and an example to her pupils.' The headteacher and her leadership team provide consistently strong role models for staff and pupils. They combine high expectations with guidance, support and encouragement. This means that staff feel valued and appreciated. They are proud to work in the school and report strong teamwork. One member of staff said: 'We are the Leechpool family – We would do anything to support each other.'

The school's welcoming and highly inclusive atmosphere ensures that every pupil feels valued. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities play as full and active a part in school life as their peers and achieve equally well. Many parents commented on the strength of support for their children. One said: 'The school's focus on inclusivity sets children up for the future.'

The school's curriculum is carefully designed to support learning from children's earliest days in school. Subject leaders work well together to make sure that learning builds strongly on what pupils know from year to year. Leaders review and revise the curriculum continuously, making changes and improvements in response to pupils' needs. High-quality work to support pupils during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns meant that leaders knew precisely which pupils were likely to need extra help on return to school, and made sure this was provided.

The school's highly effective reading programme ensures that all pupils learn reliable reading skills. All staff are trained in teaching phonics, and this ensures a consistent approach across the school. Parents of children in Reception Year are very pleased with their children's progress in learning to read. Leaders introduced extra reading help following the easing of the pandemic, knowing that some pupils would need support. The impact of these arrangements has been so significant that they are now a regular feature of school life. During the inspection, some of the older pupils described the progress they have made in their reading in recent months, the confidence this has given them to contribute during lessons, and the positive impact this has had on their spelling and writing skills.

Pupils are settled and attentive during lessons. A gentle reminder is usually all that is needed if pupils lose focus. Teachers and teaching assistants have a thorough knowledge of pupils' needs. They assess pupils' progress continuously during the school day, as well as over time. Staff support pupils with kindness and understanding. One pupil said: 'The teachers are always there to help you when you're stuck on a subject, and they explain it really well.'

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is a particular strength. The school's aim, 'breathing life into learning, to be the best we can be', is reflected throughout school life. One parent's comment reflected the views of many: 'Leechpool provides excellent extra-curricular clubs and encourages involvement by all.' Another said: 'The school offers fantastic playground facilities, lots of space, a wonderful library, and a huge range of clubs and activities.'

Governors provide effective support and challenge for school leaders. They are rightly proud of the school but, like the headteacher, are never complacent. Governors share the headteacher's commitment to continuous review and improvement.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding policies and procedures. They give pupils' safety a high priority. Leaders make sure that staff are up to date with safeguarding issues, such as training, quizzes and a safeguarding newsletter. Safeguarding expertise on the governing body ensures that governors always give this aspect of the school's work suitable attention.

The school's upbeat and confident atmosphere ensures that pupils feel welcome. Staff greet pupils warmly and with smiles. This helps pupils to feel valued and secure. Pupils talk about lots of things that they can do if they are feeling worried or anxious, such as putting a message in the class 'worry box' or going to talk to Mabel.

## 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125918
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241942
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	419
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Vinod Wagjiani
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Davenport
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.leechpoolprimaryschool.co.uk">www.leechpoolprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has a breakfast club, which is managed and operated by the governing body.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## 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 met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers and other senior leaders. She also met with a local authority representative, and with five governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. She also considered the views expressed by staff in Ofsted's survey.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. Deep dives included visiting a range of lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking with leaders, teachers and pupils.

- The inspector spoke with pupils in the classroom, during the lunch break, and at other times during the school day.
- The views of parents were gathered via a range of sources, including Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and informal discussions at the start of the school day.
- The inspector assessed the school's culture of safeguarding throughout the inspection. They checked the single central record and reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents and records.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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