

Prestigious National Teaching Awards honour Leechpool's Head Teacher, Nicola Davenport following an outstanding Ofsted inspection report.

The UK's Teaching Awards Trust exists to celebrate individuals who have made truly exceptional contributions to the education of the nation's young people. Every year the Trust sifts through the countless award nominations that pour in from the UK's state and independent schools.

Awards are made across a range of key categories, perhaps the most significant of which is for Headteacher of the Year which recognises and honours the United Kingdom's most outstanding leaders in both Primary and Secondary schools.

In making their Headteacher awards, judges look for an ambitious range of exceptional attributes including the headteacher's vision, their leadership, the learning environment that they have created and the collaboration they have nurtured within and beyond the school community.

Examining all the evidence submitted, the judges finally whittled down the shortlist for Primary School Headteacher of the Year to five mighty impressive candidates. These underwent a rigorous interview process with the judging panel in April before the results, in which Nicola was the prestigious Bronze award winner, were finally announced in late June 2023.

Chairman of the school governors, Vinod Wagjiani, commented "Nicola Davenport's vision and dedication has crafted a school of outstanding qualities, where students and staff thrive and flourish.

"Her transformative leadership has created a vibrant and inclusive school community that embraces diversity and nurtures growth. As a deserving recipient of the Bronze Head Teacher of the Year award, Nicola's unwavering commitment has left an indelible mark on the educational landscape, inspiring future generations to reach for the stars."

Nicola's remarkable achievement has to be viewed alongside the school's recent Ofsted report which states in its opening paragraph "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 report comments that "Pupils love being in this school" and continues "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."

The inspectors recognised Nicola's pivotal influence. "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.' "

All of which must be incredibly encouraging for those considering Leechpool for their child in the coming academic year, a judgment perhaps cemented by the inspectors' assessment that "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.'"