

Leechpool Primary School

Leechpool Lane, Horsham, RH13 6AG

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement over time has not been high enough, especially in writing. The quality of teaching, and how much progress pupils make, vary too much from class to class.
- Pupils' progress, particularly in writing, is not yet good. Not enough pupils make very good progress.
- Teachers do not check the learning in lessons often enough and adapt tasks to ensure pupils are always progressing quickly.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge pupils, particularly the most able, to reach their potential.
- Marking does not always provide clear guidance for pupils about how they could improve their work. Teachers do not always check that pupils follow their advice.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their writing skills across a range of subjects.
- Teachers do not expect their pupils to write at length sufficiently often.
- Not all teachers insist that pupils present their written work well.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior staff set high expectations. Teaching is improving because leaders have an accurate view of the strengths in the quality of teaching, and the areas for improvement. There is a robust plan for the training and support of staff.
- Progress in reading and mathematics is improving quickly. Pupils enjoy reading and they read widely. Pupils are making increasingly rapid progress in mathematics because they have opportunities to apply their skills to a range of real-life problems.
- The governing body is effective. Governors are both challenging and supportive. They hold the school to account for its performance.
- Pupils feel very safe and secure. Their behaviour in class and around the school is good. Expectations of behaviour are very clear and consistent across the staff team.
- Pupils benefit from well planned support for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Key British values are emphasised well throughout the school.
- Provision in the early years is good. Recent improvements in provision have enabled children to make a good start to their schooling. Interesting activities help them to learn effectively, both in the classroom and in the outside area.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and one lesson was jointly observed with the assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors. Inspectors also met a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met a group of pupils and also spoke to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and at samples of work in English, mathematics and other subjects in their exercise books. They listened to a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents, including those concerned with pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and information about teachers' performance. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. The minutes of governing body meetings were also considered.
- Inspectors considered the 62 responses by parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. They also considered the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Barron	Additional Inspector
Clare Morgan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding that the school receives for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The early years provision consists of two Reception classes. Children attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes. The headteacher and eight other teachers are new to the school.
- At the previous inspection, there were six teaching posts that were filled by temporary staff. All staff posts are now permanent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially in writing, by:
 - setting consistently challenging work for all pupils, especially the most able
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their writing skills in a range of subjects
 - expecting pupils to write at length more frequently
 - placing more importance on high standards of presentation of pupils' work.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - check the quality of learning of pupils in lessons more frequently to ensure they always make good progress
 - give pupils clear guidance from marking on to how to improve their work, and check that pupils follow the advice given.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior staff have a clear vision of what is needed to improve the school. Coupled with the good support offered by all members of staff, and by the governing body, this has enabled the school to speed up pupils' progress. School leaders have established an ethos in which pupils' achievement is improving quickly, and behaviour remains good. This is particularly evident in Key Stage 1 where attainment has risen annually over the last three years. Results in the national tests do not yet reflect this improving picture.
- Senior and subject leaders check the quality of teaching rigorously. Teachers receive robust and timely support when improvements are needed, and further checks are made to ensure that the support is having the desired impact. Through the appraisal procedures, leaders hold teachers closely to account, and set ambitious targets for the achievement of pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and work in pupils' books shows the better progress now being made.
- The leadership of teaching is good because any weaknesses in teaching are accurately identified and training is successfully addressing these. For example, the Big Write training has started to accelerate pupils' progress because staff now focus on key features that make writing effective and illustrate these for pupils increasingly well.
- The performance of teaching and support staff is well managed. They have access to high-quality training to help them to improve their skills. Staff feel valued and morale is high.
- The promotion of equal opportunities is good. The school offers all pupils support of good quality and equal access to an exciting and stimulating curriculum. All staff ensure that there is no discrimination. The strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes good relationships. Staff promote British values through the curriculum and assemblies, and this prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum ensures pupils learn about, and have a good understanding of, different people, places, lifestyles and faiths. A broad range of resources, including books and a wide variety of educational trips, supplements the curriculum well. Visitors to the school are selected with care. Books are carefully chosen, often to give insights into lives different to those of the school community.
- Leaders ensure that the school meets all statutory safeguarding requirements. Policies are very clear, and fully reflect local and national guidance. Staff are exceptionally well trained and are vigilant about issues of child protection. They are supported by good systems of communication and record keeping.
- The school uses the additional government funding increasingly effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils, individually and in small groups. It is used to provide extra support for vulnerable pupils and to improve links with parents. The rate at which these pupils' progress is accelerating is the result of well-focused support, especially in reading.
- Leaders make good use of the primary school sport funding. Teachers work alongside specialist sports coaches to improve their teaching of physical education and games, and pupils are able to participate in a wider range of sports and competitions.
- The local authority has closely monitored the school's performance. It has supported leaders to make the recent improvements to aspects of the school and to evaluate the impact of these actions. As a result, the headteacher has maintained a sharp focus on the school's priorities.
- The school engages very well with parents and partnerships with parents are strong. The views expressed in responses to Parent View and to the school's own questionnaire are mostly very positive, particularly about how the school cares for its pupils and looks after them.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors use their knowledge of the quality of teaching to maintain an overview of the management of teachers' performance. They ensure that there is a clear link with any salary increases. They are rigorous in making sure that all statutory requirements are met, especially with regard to safeguarding and child protection. The governing body has high expectations for the school and works well with senior leaders to bring about continued improvement in pupils' attainment and progress. The governors recognise this as their key priority. They know how well pupils are doing and how good teaching is. Governors offer support to the school, yet ask searching questions. They visit the school regularly and receive good-quality information about its performance from senior leaders. Governors make good use of this information, including pupil performance data, to hold leaders to close account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is characterised by a climate of mutual respect and a strong caring ethos. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and enables pupils to make better progress. Pupils get on well with one another and with adults in the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are well motivated, listen attentively and work independently and in groups effectively. As a result, lessons proceed smoothly without any interruptions to learning. However, there are times when not all pupils are fully engaged because the level of challenge provided does not hold their interest sufficiently.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered around the school. They are very aware of the school's rules and say that rewards and sanctions are fair and consistently applied. Pupils are proud of their school and help to keep it tidy. Pupils say that they really enjoy coming to school.
- The school keeps detailed records of the few incidents of poor behaviour and responds to them in a robust and well-considered manner. The school provides good support to pupils who have emotional and social difficulties, helping them to manage their own behaviour.
- Attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils told inspectors that they feel completely safe because they know that staff always care for them extremely well. Parents are also exceptionally positive about the safety of their children and how well they are looked after. They feel this is at the heart of the school.
- All staff undertake safeguarding training very regularly and effective liaison with outside agencies ensures pupils' safety.
- Pupils fully understand that bullying can take different forms, but say that there is no bullying in their school. They know the difference between bullying and 'falling out'. Records show that there are very few serious incidents, including instances of bullying of any sort.
- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the risks that they might face, especially when using the internet. Visits to the school by the emergency services and specific lessons on e-safety, for instance, ensure that they know how to keep themselves safe.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not been good enough over time to ensure that all pupils make good progress, because expectations of what pupils can achieve have not in the past been high enough. However, the quality of teaching is improving after a period of considerable change in teachers and teaching assistants, and good training and in-school support.
- In some classes, pupils are challenged effectively by the tasks and questions that teachers set. However, this is not done consistently well across the school. Teachers do not always ensure that activities make pupils think hard enough and, as a result, they do not always make as much progress as they could. There are also times when teachers do not ask the most able pupils sufficiently challenging questions to ensure that they make good progress during lessons.
- Teachers do not always check carefully enough to find out what pupils can already do and what they therefore need to do next. In cases where this is done successfully, pupils do make better progress. For example, in one class, the teacher quickly checked at the beginning of the lesson pupils' current knowledge of how to identify the key features of a text. Follow-up questions then provided a good level of challenge, leading to good learning. Similarly, teachers do not always check the progress pupils make during lessons well enough. Consequently, as pupils complete the tasks set, teachers do not regularly move them on to new tasks that challenge them further, and so they do not always make sufficient gains in their understanding.
- Pupils' progress is currently improving in writing, but not as quickly as in reading and mathematics. This is because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to apply their writing skills in a range of subjects. Furthermore, pupils are not writing extended pieces of work often enough.
- The teaching of reading and mathematics is improving, with more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in different subjects. This approach is helping pupils to make faster progress. However, in writing, not all teachers insist on neat handwriting and good presentation. As a result, these aspects of writing

vary too much in quality.

- Leaders have introduced a good new system for marking pupils' work. Teachers are working hard to follow the guidance consistently and to mark work in line with the school's policy. However, there are differences between classes in the extent to which pupils are expected to respond to teachers' comments and guidance about how to improve their work. As a consequence, this slows the rate at which some pupils learn.
- Where teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, pupils make better progress. Most teachers have good subject knowledge in mathematics and make good use of this to question pupils about the strategies they use to complete calculations. Teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their thinking and develop their basic skills through problem solving and mathematical investigations. This is improving the progress that pupils make.
- The support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants who work with particular pupils are very well informed about their needs and ensure that they do as much as possible for themselves. This enables these pupils to develop their skills and to participate fully in the life of the school.
- Standards of reading are improving in the school. It is taught well and, as a result, pupils are making better progress. Pupils are skilfully taught phonics (the sounds that letters make) from an early age and this helps them to read unfamiliar words accurately. As a result, pupils quickly develop the skills to read texts that are appropriate to their ability.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case in writing.
- The results of the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2014 show that Year 6 pupils attained broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, achievement requires improvement. Although the proportion of pupils making expected progress from their Key Stage 1 starting points was broadly average, the proportion making more than expected progress was below average, especially in writing. Current school data indicate that the proportion of pupils making expected and more than expected progress is rising quickly, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The attainment of Year 1 pupils in the national phonic screening check in 2014 was below the national average. Because letters and sounds are now reinforced effectively, more pupils are on track to reach the expected standard. Pupils now make good use of their understanding of phonics to help them read and spell unfamiliar words.
- In 2014, the gap in attainment at the end of Year 6 between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates was about three terms in mathematics, four terms in reading and five terms in writing. Compared to other pupils nationally, the gap was three terms in mathematics and reading, and five terms in writing. These gaps are closing rapidly because the progress that these pupils are making now is being better tracked. Where pupils make insufficient progress, effective extra support is provided by teachers and teaching assistants. Because of this, disadvantaged pupils are reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are now close to that of their classmates and to other pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they receive good support from teaching assistants during whole-class lessons and in small-group work. This includes good support for early reading skills.
- The progress of the most able pupils currently in school, although improving, still varies too much between subjects and classes. Recent improvements in teaching are addressing the underperformance of this group, but teachers are not yet consistently providing demanding work for these pupils in all classes.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress in the early years so that, by the end of the Reception year, they are well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of children that reach a good level of development is rapidly rising. Last year, the proportion was lower than the national figure. The school acted quickly to improve the children's skill levels by providing more challenging activities. As a result, the school's evidence indicates that the proportion reaching a good level of development is on track to be much higher than last year's national figure.

- The quality of teaching is good. Staff ensure that learning activities are purposeful and well focused, and that children are fully involved in their learning. Children have access to a good range of indoor and outdoor activities in a stimulating learning environment.
- Staff assess children's learning all the time, and records are kept in individual 'learning journeys'. The records are well documented and provide clear evidence of children's progress. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly meet to check the progress of all Reception children, and adjust their planning for any who may be falling behind.
- Children feel very safe in the early years because teachers establish a very calm and supportive learning environment where routines are well established. Children behave well and quickly learn to follow instructions. They share toys and resources sensibly and begin to understand how to look after each other.
- Leadership and management are good. The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths of early years and also of the areas for further improvement. Effective links with nearby pre-school providers mean that staff know the needs of the children and quickly establish an accurate picture of their strengths soon after they join.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125918
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	456219

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Gander
Headteacher	Nicola Davenport
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2012
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