

Leechpool Primary School

Leechpool Lane, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 6AG

Inspection dates

18–19 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors are passionate about the care, welfare and education of every pupil who attends the school. They have brought about many significant improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection.
- The headteacher plays a pivotal role inspiring staff and pupils to do the best they can. She has the confidence of parents and staff, who hold the school in high regard.
- The curriculum is extremely well planned to motivate and engage pupils, and broaden their horizons and ambitions.
- Art and music feature strongly and contribute much to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children in Reception make good progress from their differing starting points. They quickly settle into the highly nurturing environment created by staff.
- Parents feel that their children thrive. They have every confidence that their children are well cared for, safe and happy.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well both inside and outside the classroom. They are consistently courteous and polite, whether or not staff are present.
- Pupils told inspectors that they thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They were highly appreciative of the teachers, and the wide range of opportunities pupils have in the arts and physical education.
- Pupils make good progress and typically reach above average standards in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Attainment in writing has accelerated due to the hard work of leaders and teachers, although standards are not yet comparable with those in other aspects of English.
- Middle leaders share senior leaders' ambition and vision for the school. They are innovative in developing the curriculum. However, some middle leaders lack confidence in analysing the impact of their good work, to pinpoint which strategies work best.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' achievement in writing so that it more closely matches the comparative strengths in reading, and in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Develop the ability of middle leaders to analyse the impact of their good work, to identify key strategies for further improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, governors, staff and pupils share a strong sense of purpose and ambition. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders have driven improvements with great determination. As a result of improved teaching and learning, pupils are now making good progress across the curriculum.
- Parents and staff expressed highly positive views about school leaders. One parent's comment reflected the views of many: 'The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management and works tirelessly, along with her dedicated staff, to ensure that all students make good progress, not only in the core subjects, but across all areas.'
- Leaders accurately evaluate teaching and provide good-quality developmental feedback to colleagues. They facilitate a wide range of additional training. As a result, teachers use imaginative strategies to engage and challenge pupils. Teachers are confident and reflective.
- Middle leaders have a clear sense of responsibility and accountability. They benefit from the support and challenge offered by senior leaders and feel entrusted and valued. They are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement across a wide range of subjects. Middle leaders are rightly proud of their work, although some do not analyse the impact of their innovations to identify which are most effective and to fine-tune their improvement strategies.
- Staff meetings are effective in focusing staff on the impact of their teaching. They include opportunities for them to look at a range of pupils' work to gain insights into the standards expected, and to share ideas about feedback.
- The curriculum is a significant strength of the school. Pupils' academic achievement and personal development are supported extremely well through a vibrant, multi-layered and engaging programme of studies and additional activities.
- Progress in English and mathematics is not at the expense of other subjects. There is a strong focus on knowledge, understanding and skills across subjects. This is evident, for example, in the clear progression of skills in art and the high-quality artwork displayed around the school. Music features strongly in pupils' day-to-day experience and they relish the opportunities to compose and perform.
- Computing is taught systematically through the school. The curriculum in science engages pupils as they conduct investigations using first-hand evidence.
- Pupils' studies of literature, art and music, together with work in religious education and the humanities, contribute significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies provide frequent opportunities for reflection. After-school clubs, residential visits and social events add a rich dimension to pupils' learning and personal development.
- Pupils gain a secure understanding of British values. An annual 'British values week' celebrates aspects of British culture, such as the contribution of famous artists and scientists. Pupils acquire a strong sense of fair play and democracy through the election of team captains and the work of the school council. Celebrating Black History

month and women's achievement helps pupils acquire an understanding of equality issues.

- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent well. A breakfast club provides a good start to the school day. Homework clubs after school provide pupils with access to computers and opportunities for them to practise reading, spelling and multiplication tables. The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is diminishing.
- Effective use of additional funding for physical education and sports has resulted in increased participation in a wider range of activities. These include 'ultimate Frisbee', tag rugby, alternative sports and girls' football.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. Governors are perceptive and proactive. They have a wide range of expertise which enables them to provide informed support and advice to school leaders.
- There is a strong culture of ambition. Members of the governing body share a collective determination to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. They gain insights into the school's effectiveness by examining assessment information, visiting during the school day and through discussions with senior staff and subject leaders.
- Governors regularly reflect on their own effectiveness in supporting and holding the school to account. They draw up action plans that include specific and quantifiable targets. Governors are aware of the link between the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and ensure that the impact of teaching on pupils' progress is considered during annual salary reviews.
- Finances are spent wisely and effectively to improve the school environment. Over the last few years, the buildings and outside areas have been transformed. Among many improvements, all windows and doors have been replaced, classroom spaces have been modified and refurbished, three new classrooms have been built, and an imaginative 'music pod' is under construction. Governors seek assurance that additional money, including the pupil premium funding, is spent effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership team and governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding. Robust checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of all employees for working with children.
- School leaders have developed a clear culture of safeguarding within the school which ensures that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Staff are very well trained and are vigilant in recording their concerns. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree.
- The comprehensive safeguarding policy provides clear guidance and sets out precise expectations for staff. All adults are clear about what constitutes a safeguarding concern and what actions are required.

- All staff understand that everyone has a part to play in ensuring that pupils are safe. They are well trained and fully aware of how to record any concerns. The school works successfully with a range of outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their pupils well and are able to direct questioning and pitch work appropriately, which results in pupils developing very positive attitudes to learning and self-confidence.
- Pupils increasingly take responsibility for their own learning. In addition to completing homework diligently, they frequently take the initiative and pursue their studies independently at home.
- Teachers interpret the curriculum imaginatively and this motivates and engages pupils. For example, in art, pupils rose to the challenge of basing their work on well-known artists, such as Banksy and Klimt.
- Teachers' knowledge of pupils' strengths, and any gaps in their understanding and skills, enables them to ensure that pupils are increasingly and appropriately challenged through lessons and over time.
- Pupils discuss their learning maturely. Reflecting on teachers' approaches, one remarked, 'The teachers help you settle and then you just zoom off.' Another added, 'Working in groups means it's not one size fits all.'
- Activities are typically thought-provoking, and skilful questioning effectively promotes pupils' thinking and deepens their understanding. For the most part, teachers identify misconceptions during lessons and intervene successfully to move learning on. In some lessons in mathematics, misunderstandings and errors are not spotted quickly enough, so learning stalls a little.
- The most able pupils rise to the challenges set by teachers, and pupils who find learning more difficult are supported effectively. Consequently, pupils generally make good progress, whatever their starting points.
- Classrooms are well organised and provide stimulating and supportive environments for learning. Staff manage behaviour extremely well, not least by providing tasks which motivate, engage and challenge pupils. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and progress. They are well-briefed and emulate the approach of teachers, for example in their effective questioning.
- Effective feedback, in line with the school's assessment systems, means that pupils are clear about their attainment against the school's expectations, and what they need to do to improve. Teachers effectively promote neat, fluent handwriting and accurate presentation in mathematics.
- A high level of specialist knowledge among the staff promotes good-quality outcomes, especially in art, music, French and mathematics.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Parents are fulsome in their praise for the way in which their children are supported and cared for. Among their numerous comments were: 'Every member of staff cares and shows concern for all the children, providing a loving, caring atmosphere'; 'The school provides a nurturing environment that encourages and challenges children'; and, 'The school have been amazing in the support that they have given my son who has special needs. I couldn't praise the staff more highly.'
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. Those spoken to during the inspection were keen to explain to the inspection team how well cared for and safe they felt. One said, 'It helps as you grow older because the teachers really know you.'
- School leaders provide opportunities for pupils to make a difference in the school and beyond. Pupil councillors recently presented their own evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement to the governors.
- Pupils are involved in improving the environment, raising money for charities and promoting healthy eating. They spoke highly of the transition arrangements as they prepared to move on to secondary school. Pupils performed for parents who had helped in school during the school year, reflecting their appreciation of parents' contributions.
- The Year 6 leavers' book includes telling evidence of the school's success in developing pupils' positive attitudes and ambition. Under the heading, 'In ten years' time I would like to be ...' pupils' responses included 'Proud of myself', 'The best person I can be', and 'Doing everything I love'. Their effusive thanks and gratitude to the staff were clearly heartfelt.
- Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe both in and out of school because of the clear guidance they receive. Staying safe online has a high profile and pupils are aware of how to avoid potential hazards when using modern communication technology.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They are mutually supportive and cooperate with one another during lessons. They play together very well during breaktimes. Pupils enjoy school life and are aware of the consequences of their actions.
- Pupils say the 'traffic light' system that acknowledges and records behaviour is effective. They say that poor behaviour and incidents of bullying are extremely rare. Recently, the school added gold to the system in response to pupils' frequently exemplary behaviour.
- During rehearsals for the end of term 'Leechfest' concert, there was a real sense of community as pupils, staff and parents worked together. Pupils were rightly proud of their performances and their support and encouragement of their classmates was

clearly genuine.

- Pupils enjoy school and attend well. The school adopts a robust approach to unauthorised absence in line with statutory requirements. At the same time, the school sensitively supports families in crisis. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure good attendance and to support parents in ensuring that their children arrive on time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's comprehensive assessment records, together with work in their books, indicate that all groups of pupils typically make at least the progress the school expects through each year. Many pupils exceed these expectations. This year, for example, around half of the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 made better than the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's own assessment information closely matches the results of national tests. Pupils tend to reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages. Progress in writing has accelerated, although pupils' attainment in writing is not in line with that in reading, and spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Due to systematic and effective teaching, the results of the Year 1 phonics checks have been above the national averages in the last two years. This provides a secure basis for pupils' work in reading and writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities typically build well on their individual starting points because they are well supported. This year, around half of these pupils made particularly good progress in mathematics through key stage 2.
- The school's assessment information shows that, overall, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils in the school. When compared to the achievement of all pupils nationally, differences are diminishing.
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English make good and often rapid progress in acquiring essential communication skills, and this contributes to their good progress in other subjects.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, typically fulfil their potential. They rise to the challenges and acquire a greater depth of understanding in English and mathematics.
- A group of avid readers in Year 6 showed an excellent understanding of different genres when discussing their reading preferences. They described how their wide reading and challenging tasks during guided reading lessons contributed to their skills in writing. One offered an example of her use of literary devices, such as short sentences and repetition, to reflect the character's state of mind and the pattern of their thoughts when flitting from certainty to doubt: 'My life is good at the moment. Or as good as it will ever get. I lived with my brother and he was my best friend. Or was my best friend. He was my only one. But I don't mind. Not anymore. Not when I'm free. Free for the first time in my life. Free.'
- The most able pupils develop a good degree of confidence and fluency in mathematics. This was evident as they used algebraic formulae to solve mathematical problems.
- Pupils achieve well in science, developing a good range of knowledge and skills

through practical investigations. Good-quality work is also evident in art, history and geography. Pupils were observed being creative in music lessons, for example using the pentatonic scale to improvise. Pupils sing very tunefully and expressively, incorporating dynamics, and harmonising accurately.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is well led. Applying an increasing range of performance information, the leader has ensured that the quality of teaching has improved. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is again in line with the national average.
- The leader responded promptly and positively to the fact that, this year, the two Reception classes had a large proportion of boys; some with behaviour issues. By taking quick and effective action, she ensured that children made good progress within a calm, productive atmosphere. This was due, not least, to the curriculum being adapted in order to cater for the specific characteristics of the cohort.
- Well established links with pre-school settings and careful baseline assessments help to ensure that staff are quickly aware of children's personal and social development and their communication and number skills soon after they enter Reception. Adults use this information to plan learning according to children's individual aptitudes and competencies.
- The colourful and well-presented learning journeys demonstrate the good progress all groups of children made from their starting points in September this academic year.
- Parents appreciate the information they receive and are very happy with the provision. Among their comments were, 'My children have settled well and received all the support they needed. I'm amazed at the amount they have learned,' and, 'My son has made excellent progress due to the care and understanding of his teacher. His progress socially and academically since the start of the year has been fantastic to see.'
- Adults support children's learning well. They frequently interact with children and their questioning helps to ensure that they remain engaged and challenged. The use of correct phonetical knowledge and pronunciation is applied consistently in lessons. This underpins the successful approach to teaching phonics and early literacy skills in the Reception classes.
- Teachers plan exciting and relevant lessons which engage children and also allow plenty of time for children to follow their own interests during well-resourced 'free-flow' sessions. The indoor and outdoor areas provide a wide range of learning opportunities. The current building work temporarily reduced the outdoor space available, but plans are well in hand to provide extensive outdoor facilities.
- Adults are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They ensure that children are well cared for and they respond quickly to any minor accidents.
- Staff promote good behaviour extremely well. Children cooperate, share resources and help one another. For example, children happily work with their classmates as they play with large building blocks or share laptops.
- Children respond well to the imaginative learning opportunities set up by adults. They display high levels of curiosity, imagination and concentration. Their response to the

'return of the evil Pea' demonstrated all these characteristics as they explored the 'mischief' that had been caused, and tidied and sorted out the mess that had been made.

- Children's secure basic skills and very positive attitudes to learning stand them in good stead as they start Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	125918
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10032837

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Humphreys
Headteacher	Nicola Davenport
Telephone number	01403 210233
Website	www.leechpoolprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	head@leechpool.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities 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 standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club, and an after-school club is managed by a private company.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed activities in all year groups. Most observations were undertaken with the headteacher and the two assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and a member of the local authority.
- Meetings were also held with pupils to discuss their views on their learning and well-being, and with parents to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 6. They talked to pupils at breaktimes and in the lunch hall, in lessons and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' performance across the school, school improvement plans, the school's evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, governors' minutes, and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of books to see what progress had been made across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 88 responses to the Ofsted parent survey, Parent View, and the results of the inspection questionnaires completed by 38 members of staff and 77 pupils.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Parfoot	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Wibroe	Ofsted Inspector

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