

Inspection of Leybourne, St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary Academy

Rectory Lane North, Leybourne, West Malling, Kent ME19 5HD

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Ofsted has not previously inspected Leybourne, St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Leybourne, St Peter and St Paul Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as Leybourne, St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary Academy as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values, which are love, respect, compassion and trust, provide a firm foundation for school life. Opportunities for reflection, such as collective worship, are a regular feature of the curriculum. These are used well to help pupils to develop their understanding of equality, justice and fair play. Pupils are kind and warm hearted. For example, during the inspection, some of the youngest children in the school explained that the school chickens were sad because the fox had been trying to get them, but were happy now that they were safe in their house.

Pupils enjoy school and are keen to do their best. They greet visitors warmly and politely. Teachers want pupils to do well, and most do so. Pupils usually behave well. Pupils understand how hurtful it can be if someone is being mean, and know what to do if this is happening. They have every confidence in their teachers to help if needed. Pupils who spoke with inspectors struggled to remember a case of bullying in school, but said that occasionally people could be thoughtless. The school's behaviour records confirm this view. They show that leaders take suitable action when concerns are raised.

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

Leaders have secured important improvements in the school's curriculum since the current headteacher was appointed. For example, changes to subject plans in English and mathematics have ensured that teachers are clearer than they were previously about what they need to teach. As a result, teaching builds strongly on what pupils have learned before as they move up through the year groups. Improvements in these subjects have ensured that pupils continue to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school successfully promotes enjoyment of books from the moment children start school in Reception. Teachers read to pupils regularly and the well-stocked library provides an inviting place for pupils to enjoy books. During the inspection, pupils spoke with interest about the stories they were reading. The school's phonics programme ensures that pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers. Some pupils have fallen behind in their reading during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders know this and have prioritised extra help for these pupils in the coming months.

Pupils learn how to use a range of resources to help them to complete mathematics tasks, such as division problems, successfully. They enjoy working on challenging tasks, talk proudly about what they have learned, and are understandably pleased with their progress.

The foundation subjects are not as well developed as English and mathematics. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders had developed secure plans for the teaching of

subjects such as history, geography and physical education (PE). However, the pandemic has delayed the implementation of improvements in the classroom.

Teachers use ongoing assessments well to check that pupils have retained what they have learned, and to identify and support those who need extra help. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not always supported well enough. Leaders have secured notable improvements in the quality of provision for pupils with SEND in recent months, and continue to prioritise this area of the school's work.

Effective training provided by the trust prior to the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened subject leaders' understanding of the curriculum. However, subject leaders' roles in monitoring how well subjects are taught, and its impact on pupils' learning, have been hampered by the pandemic. They are keen to develop this aspect of their practice.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to the school's welcoming and hard-working atmosphere. Occasionally a few pupils find it hard to listen as carefully as they should during lessons. They rarely disturb others, but sometimes need a reminder from their teacher about what they should be doing.

Leaders are currently reintroducing the school's usual wide range of clubs, visits and visitors following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. These enhance learning and help pupils to learn about different beliefs, cultures and religions. The school's books and resources are carefully chosen to reflect and celebrate the United Kingdom's diversity.

High staff morale reflects leaders' success in developing strong teamwork and an atmosphere of mutual support. Staff are highly appreciative of changes made in the past few years to ensure a more manageable workload. They feel very well supported by school leaders.

Governors have an accurate view of the school's work. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for them to monitor the school's work in the usual way. However, some activities continued, despite the COVID-19 restrictions. Governors are keen to re-establish their usual monitoring activities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that everyone is knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. Strong relationships mean that pupils feel well cared for and safe. Staff are very clear about what to do if they are worried about a pupil. They know that leaders respond seriously to any concerns raised.

Safeguarding routines are part of everyday school life. This means that pupils can learn and play safely. For example, children in Reception routinely sanitise their

hands with antibacterial gel before choosing activities. The school's personal development curriculum includes regular opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the past, weaknesses in the foundation subjects meant that pupils learned less well in these subjects than in the core subjects. Leaders had already begun work to improve curriculum plans in the foundation subjects prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has ensured that well-designed subject plans provide a firm framework for teaching. However, the pandemic frustrated leaders' plans to implement these improvements in the classroom. Leaders should ensure that the revised curriculum plans are delivered consistently and effectively across the school.
- Historic weaknesses in provision for pupils with SEND have led to underachievement for some pupils. Leaders know that this has been a weaker aspect of the school's work, and have been working hard to fix this. For example, the recently appointed special needs coordinator has established earlier and sharper identification of pupils with SEND. She and the family liaison officer make sure that they are on hand to provide teachers and parents with advice and guidance. Some parents are understandably concerned about the quality of support for their children. However, others recognise marked improvements since the special needs coordinator was appointed. Leaders should press ahead with plans to improve provision for pupils with SEND, including staff training to strengthen teachers' understanding of pupils' needs. It is for this reason that the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Subject leadership is at an early stage of development. Subject leaders have been unable to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects of responsibility as fully as they would wish, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders should provide the training and support needed to ensure that subject leaders develop their roles in monitoring the implementation and impact of the curriculum.
- Some parents are dissatisfied with the quality of communication from the school. Leaders are aware that this has been a difficulty in the past, and have taken steps to improve this aspect of the school's work in the past year. For example: they are currently updating the school's website; the early years newsletter provides valuable information about what children will be learning; and the special needs coordinator is making sure that the parents of children with SEND receive timely information. However, there is clearly more to be done to ensure that all parents feel well informed and confident about the school's work. Leaders should review and improve the way the school communicates with parents.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	143987
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10199300
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Jacqueline Evans
Headteacher	Tina Holditch
Website	www.leybourne.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The last section 48 inspection took place in 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due soon, and leaders have made arrangements for this to take place in due course.
- The school has a breakfast club, which is open to pupils who attend the school and is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also spoke with three governors, including the chair of governors, and spoke with the trust's director of primary education and the chief executive officer.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, held a discussion with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central register. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the school's safeguarding records and spoke with a group of pupils.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Gillian Lovatt-Young

Ofsted Inspector

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