

Inspection of Liphook Infant School

Avenue Close, The Avenue, Liphook Infant School, Liphook, Hampshire GU30 7QE

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Liphook Infant School are enthusiastic about their learning. They enjoy school because the curriculum provides them with the confidence to study and explore a wide range of subjects. Pupils learn the basics quickly and accrue and use powerful knowledge as they move through the school. The 'federation promise' ensures that pupils learn about a wide range of religions and enjoy cultural experiences that they use to make sense of the world and communities around them.

Pupils behave exceptionally well because staff teach them the rules right from the start of Reception. Pupils make the most of their time and listen to their teachers' every word. This excellent behaviour is mirrored on the playground where pupils delight in the range of games and activities on offer. Bullying is extremely rare, but pupils know staff will always step in to iron out any friendship issues they need support with.

Staff expect a lot from pupils and encourage them at every step. Pupils feel safe at school and trust adults to help them with their worries or problems. However, leaders in the school do not handle safeguarding concerns in the right way. This potentially puts children at risk of harm.

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

The curriculum is well established and ambitious. Subject leaders have carefully selected the concepts pupils must learn and have arranged these in a logical order. All plans begin from the Reception year, ensuring that pupils develop firm footings to build upon. Pupils are taught what is unique about different subjects and revisit these features as they study different topics. This helps pupils to choose efficient and effective approaches when they are presented with new challenges.

Pupils develop an impressive body of knowledge during their time at the school. Staff revisit key subject concepts as pupils learn about new topics. This helps pupils to embed key knowledge in their memory and to recall it quickly when needed. For example, in geography, pupils learn to compare familiar and unfamiliar locations every year, sharpening their observations each time.

Staff are well trained to deliver the curriculum. They understand what to teach, when to teach it and the best techniques to use. Staff present information clearly, meaning pupils understand what is asked of them. Staff assess pupils' knowledge carefully to identify any gaps in their understanding and to make changes to the curriculum to address these.

Children in Reception are taught phonics from the start. They enjoy learning new sounds and quickly get to grips with these, blending sounds together to form words. By the time pupils reach Year 1, the majority read very well. Pupils enjoy reading

and listening to a wide range of texts which expand their understanding of poetry and fiction. Pupils read often at school and at home, which helps them to hone their skills. However, the books provided are not always closely matched to the sounds pupils know, meaning that weaker readers can sometimes struggle.

Pupils' personal development is very carefully considered and planned. All subject leaders consider how they can develop pupils' cultural understanding through carefully selected trips and visits. Families were delighted to be involved in these during lockdown, where the school arranged online visits to museums and galleries. Mentors are assigned to help pupils to expand their language and to pursue their hobbies and interests. A wide range of clubs helps pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to learn new skills, sports and languages.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. From Reception, pupils are expected to listen attentively, contribute often and focus on their tasks. Staff notice when pupils behave well and reward their efforts accordingly. Pupils shift between group, paired and individual tasks without wasting a second. Levels of pupil absence are low because families are supported to develop positive attendance habits.

Leaders work closely with nurseries and families to understand the strengths and needs of children before they start at the school. Staff in Reception closely monitor children, particularly their social interactions and speech, to pick up on any signs that they may need support. Leaders use this information well, forming ambitious plans and breaking down targets into manageable chunks to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the curriculum and achieve highly.

Leaders and governors maintain a close eye on staff well-being. Staff receive first-class training, helping them to fulfil their duties efficiently and effectively. A comprehensive development programme allows staff to gain recognised qualifications in leadership and research. Staff report high levels of morale and have great faith in the school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Pupils learn about appropriate relationships and that they are deserving of care and safety. Pupils trust adults in school and share their worries with the expectation that staff will help. Staff are comprehensively vetted and well trained to identify signs of abuse. They report concerns to leaders without delay. However, leaders do not possess a strong understanding of what to do with this information. Inspectors' scrutiny of cases found that concerns are not always followed up properly. Leaders do not record their actions in a timely or clear fashion. On too many occasions, leaders do not pass on welfare concerns to agencies that need this information to keep children safe. When this was identified during the inspection, leaders took prompt action to follow up concerns with the appropriate professionals.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not always follow the local and nationally agreed approaches when they receive safeguarding concerns. Too often, leaders try to address concerns themselves when, in the first instance, these must be passed on to external agencies. This means that pupils and families do not receive the professional support they need to stay safe. Leaders and governors must take urgent action to ensure that:
 - all designated safeguarding leads follow locally agreed procedures for assessing and reporting safeguarding concerns
 - all referrals and actions are recorded in line with statutory requirements
 - governors develop systems to check the appropriateness and urgency of leaders' actions.
- The school does not routinely use appropriate reading books for pupils to practise their early reading skills. This makes it hard for weaker readers to improve. Leaders should ensure that they provide pupils with reading books that closely match the sounds they know to teach early reading in the school.

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	116056
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10200889
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Saycell
Headteacher	Michele Frost (executive headteacher)
Website	www.liphookfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated and works closely with the nearby junior school. The executive headteacher leads both schools.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with senior leaders and five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with two officers from the local authority.

- The inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, art and history. They talked to subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. They then considered a wider range of evidence.
- The inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records, interviewing staff and holding discussions with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through the Ofsted surveys. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

James Munt

Ofsted Inspector

Alice Early

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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