

Inspection of Lime Tree Primary School

Battlebridge Lane, Merstham, Surrey RH1 3LH

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are proud to be part of this exceptional school. Leaders' unwavering focus on weaving the school's values of courage, responsibility, cooperation and resilience through every aspect of school life has created an environment in which pupils thrive. Pupils flourish. They mature into curious, articulate and well-rounded individuals.

Pupils feel valued. Leaders listen and act upon the ideas pupils have on how to improve their school further. A sense of partnership unites the school. Pupils relish the responsibilities that leaders trust them to carry out such as being prefects, sports leaders or art ambassadors. For example, they work alongside staff at lunchtimes so that everyone can enjoy the many activities on offer.

Leaders set the highest of expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils' attitude to learning is exemplary. They work hard. Classrooms buzz with a shared sense of purpose.

Pupils say adults listen if they are worried in any way. They know that staff will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour. It is sorted out quickly. Pupils say bullying incidents are rare and they feel safe and protected.

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

Much thought has gone into devising a curriculum that meets pupils' needs and interests, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Right from the start in early years, all children are excited and motivated to learn by the experiences they are offered.

The careful construction of the ambitious curriculum means that pupils continually build on their learning until they secure a broad and deep knowledge across all subjects. Pupils know and remember a great deal of their learning. This prepares them very well for the next stages of their education as they move up through the school and beyond.

Leaders ensure that high quality professional development for all staff is a priority. This helps give staff the subject specific knowledge they need to deliver all aspects of the curriculum confidently. Teachers ensure that pupils learn things in the right order to help them to achieve high quality end points. For example, pupils designing a tent for a mountaineer were able to apply previous learning about joining materials, insulation, and strong structures to complete the task well.

Teachers expertly check what all pupils can remember from their previous learning. They use this information to set follow-up work at precisely the right level of challenge. Pupils with SEND are considered at every stage so that their learning is supported well, and they experience success.

Children get off to a flying start in early years. Staff are experts in helping children to master their phonics and learn to read. Reading has a high priority across the school. Anyone who struggles or starts to fall behind is quickly identified and given the help they need to catch up quickly. Reading and books are valued by staff and pupils alike both as a source of pleasure and information.

An emphasis on using and understanding a wide range of words abounds. Pupils quickly develop an impressive vocabulary. The youngest confidently described life cycles with clarity and understanding. Further up the school pupils could discuss issues around democracy and protected characteristics with remarkable eloquence, insight and knowledge.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development truly stands out. Groups such as the parents' cultural committee work with leaders to help ensure that pupils see difference as positive. Pupils have a strong sense of equality. Activities such as mystery guest videos from teachers and parents help pupils to understand and value a range of cultures and beliefs.

Excellent learning behaviours are established quickly. Children in the early years enjoyed a joyfully exuberant dance session but settled down quickly when it finished. Elsewhere pupils work very well together in groups or pairs. They are full of ideas and support each other to do well.

Staff are unanimously proud to work at the school. They are appreciative of the careful consideration that is given to their workload and well-being by leaders and school strategy board members. The trust and the school strategy board support leaders exceptionally well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are well trained and have detailed knowledge about how to identify safeguarding concerns. The particularly positive relationships across the school help staff to quickly spot when all is not well.

Parents have a high degree of trust in the school to help keep pupils safe. Where necessary leaders are tenacious in their work with other agencies to secure help and support for pupils.

Pupils feel very safe too. Leaders carefully weave activities into the curriculum to further develop pupils' awareness of particular issues. Recently, for example, there has been additional work around online safety.

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	139557
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10227483
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	447
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lynne O'Reilly
Headteacher	Claire Williamson
Website	www.limetreeschool.org
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the GLF Schools Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with school leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust and had a virtual meeting with members of the school strategy board.
- The inspectors conducted deep dives into reading, English, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed curriculum planning with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to

some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading.

- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspectors spoke to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff questionnaires. Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff to discuss their views about the school, including workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons, in the playground, and around the school.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Justin Bartlett	Ofsted Inspector

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