

Inspection of Three Legged Cross First and Nursery School

Church Road, Three Legged Cross, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 6RF

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Three Legged Cross First and Nursery School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They are eager to learn. This includes when they try something new or tricky. Pupils are proud of their own and each other's achievements.

Pupils behave well. They know the school's routines and leaders' expectations. Pupils show respect for each other and for the adults in the school. The school is a calm and orderly place. Pupils feel safe.

Parents believe that staff know their children well. Pupils say that while they may have 'little fallouts' with friends, there is no bullying. Pupils are confident to speak out if they see someone treated unfairly. They trust adults working at the school to help them if they share a problem.

A highlight of the school day is an opportunity for pupils to read to Harry, a therapy dog. Pupils enjoy attending regular sporting events and a wide range of after-school clubs. They know how to be physically and mentally healthy. Staff nurture pupils' talents and interests successfully. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn to play musical instruments. They learn important life skills, such as money management, when they make and sell crafts at the 'winter fayre'.

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

Children learn the joy of books right from the start in the Nursery. Staff skilfully introduce children to new and interesting words through play, nursery rhymes and stories. Children use the words in their own play successfully. For example, they use the story and vocabulary of 'Little Red Riding Hood' when at play in the school's woods. Leaders' focus to develop children's communication and literacy knowledge in the early years is effective.

In the Reception Year, children learn phonics well and begin to read simple words. Teachers quickly spot children who need extra help to secure their phonic knowledge. With regular phonics practice, pupils build their reading fluency and accuracy effectively. Pupils like to read. They enjoy listening to stories selected by their teachers. This often inspires them to independently read more books by the same author.

Leaders have designed a clear and coherent curriculum, from Nursery to Year 4. It sets out the essential knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. When teachers break down the curriculum's core content into small, achievable steps, pupils secure new knowledge successfully. Additional practice, when needed, regular review of knowledge and appropriate use of resources help pupils remember the school's curriculum in these subjects well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Subject leadership is less well developed in some subjects. Where this occurs, subject leaders do not help teachers to assess the impact of and revise the subject's curriculum as intended. This means that, sometimes, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not spotted and closed quickly enough. For example, checks on how well pupils apply knowledge to problem-solve in mathematics are not effective. While some aspects of the geography curriculum, such as locational knowledge, are carefully assessed and pupils' knowledge secure, others are not.

Trustees work with members of the local school committee (LSC) to understand the school's strengths and areas for development. LSC members challenge and hold leaders to account for their actions with confidence.

Leaders and staff share consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Well-established routines support pupils to learn and play together successfully. Staff make sure pupils quickly settle and are ready to learn after social times. Leaders are quick to spot and support pupils who need additional help to understand and express their emotions appropriately.

Pupils' attendance is improving. Leaders work with families to remove barriers that affect children attending school. Leaders rightly seek advice and support from external agencies when a pupil's attendance does not improve quickly. Leaders' actions are having an impact.

Each year, leaders carefully plan events and activities to support pupils' personal development. Staff skilfully teach pupils about people's lives that may be different from their own. For example, pupils visit a local mosque. They learn the story of Rosa Parks. This knowledge helps pupils develop curiosity. Pupils learn to be responsible members of their school community, helping each other at lunchtime.

Staff's well-being is a priority for leaders. Staff feel valued and supported by leaders to manage their workload. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders complete the necessary safeguarding checks before staff and volunteers begin working at the school. The accuracy of safeguarding records is checked by trustees.

Staff receive training to help them identify the needs of vulnerable pupils. They record concerns and share them with leaders responsible for safeguarding pupils. Leaders respond appropriately and in a timely manner. They seek advice from external agencies to secure support for families in need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including with regard to healthy relationships and when online. For example, pupils know not to share passwords.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment to reflect on and adapt the curriculum sufficiently well. This means, sometimes, pupils cannot build on prior learning. Leaders need to ensure teachers use assessment to reflect on and adapt the curriculum so that pupils know and remember the curriculum's essential knowledge and vocabulary.
- In some subjects, the role of the subject leader is less well developed. Some subject leaders do not have the knowledge and skills required to ensure staff deliver the curriculum well. Leaders need to develop the role and expertise of subject leaders to ensure that the curriculum helps pupils learn important content well.

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.

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	142512
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10256636
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Musselwhite
Headteacher	Justine Horn
Website	www.3lxschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Three Legged Cross First and Nursery School converted to become an academy school in December 2015. When its predecessor school, Three Legged Cross First School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of The Heath Academy Trust.
- The headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection. She became the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust in 2016.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The nursery provides places for two- and three-year-old children.
- The school operates a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, pupils, the chair of trustees, a trustee, the chair of the local school committee and a challenge partner.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also observed pupils during breakfast club and breaktimes, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and leaders about personal, social and health education and opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kate Masters

Ofsted Inspector

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