

Inspection of Lipson Vale Primary School

Bernice Terrace, Lipson, Plymouth, Devon PL4 7HW

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Lipson Vale Primary School. Pupils, parents, and staff agree that the school has improved since its previous inspection.

The new headteacher has placed building strong relationships at the heart of the school's work. Staff share his commitment to this approach. Staff work hard to understand pupils' feelings and emotions. Leaders have set up systems to help pupils to explain how they feel. For example, pupils like using the 'window of tolerance'. Pupils use this approach to describe their emotions and access support when needed.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils take pride in their work. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. Bullying is rare and staff deal with it swiftly and effectively when it occurs.

Music is an important aspect of school life. Pupils described singing in the choir and playing in the orchestra as 'fun' and 'amazing'. The school has a converted bus which is a dedicated music room. Next to the bus is an outdoor stage used for public performances. This enables the local community to enjoy the music created by pupils.

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

Leaders have a clear vision for the school. They have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Effective communication and training have helped staff understand and implement the identified priorities successfully. In addition, the local authority and the restructured governing body support and challenge school leaders effectively. As a result, leaders have addressed the concerns identified at the time of the previous inspection.

In key stages 1 and 2, leaders have designed a curriculum to help pupils gain essential knowledge and understanding. The curriculum outlines what pupils are expected to learn step by step in each subject. In addition, pupils apply what they have learned in different contexts. For example, in history, pupils are supported to think like historians, as well as know historical facts and figures. Teachers use a range of assessments to check pupils' recall of what they have learned. Teachers adapt their planning to ensure that pupils learn more and remember more over time.

Reading is a priority at the school. Phonics teaching is structured carefully to support learning. Pupils start learning the sounds that letters make as soon as they start school. Pupils build successfully upon what they have learned before. Books match the sounds they are learning. Teachers identify quickly those pupils who fall behind. Well-trained staff provide additional support, which helps these pupils to catch up rapidly.

In the early years, children learn mathematics and early reading through a well-planned and sequenced curriculum. In these subjects, children build skills and knowledge effectively over time. However, leaders have not established clear intentions for what they want children to learn in other areas of the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum does not always meet the needs of children.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified and responded to quickly. Such pupils follow the same curriculum as their peers and achieve well. Pupils' individual support plans are precise and leaders review these plans regularly. Leaders provide additional guidance for teachers to support pupils who have education, health and care plans. As a result, teachers respond in a timely fashion to pupils' changing needs.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful to others. Behaviour and relationships contribute positively to learning. Pupils understand and follow the school's 'ready behaviours'.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). Leaders use local resources and charities to support the PSHE programme. For example, a local charity works in the school, exploring many topics, including modern slavery. Pupils discuss issues confidently and maturely, such as respect and positive relationships.

Musical and sporting activities happen in abundance. The school orchestra is an accomplished unit and pupils play and perform to a high standard.

Pupils are proud of their school and acknowledge the improvements that have been made. Staff appreciate the care and concern shown by leaders and enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the pupils well and receive comprehensive safeguarding training. They quickly recognise when a pupil might need support. Leaders keep appropriate records and work well to ensure pupils receive timely help. In addition, leaders liaise effectively with external agencies.

Leaders keep the necessary safeguarding records for staff and visitors at the school. Leaders take the steps needed to ensure that newly appointed staff are suitable to work with children.

During lessons, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the early years foundation stage, the curriculum does not help pupils develop their knowledge and skills over time as effectively as it could. As a result, some children do not build regularly on what they know and can do. Leaders should take action to refine the early years curriculum so that it matches the high expectations seen in other key stages.

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	113298
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10201005
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	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Faye Nimmo
Headteacher	Peter Lewis-Cole
Website	www.lvps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school does not use 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader and the leader responsible for disadvantaged pupils. An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils

about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Pupils were observed at lunch and in the playground. Inspectors also spoke informally to different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the provision for PSHE, relationships and sex education, health education and religious education.
- Inspectors considered the 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 29 free-text comments. Inspectors considered the 39 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 54 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Non Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Lees	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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