

Leiston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124594
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380927
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2012
Lead inspector	Graham Preston

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Cossey
Headteacher	Jacquie Croft
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2009
School address	King George's Avenue Leiston IP16 4JQ
Telephone number	01728 830745
Fax number	01728 832928
Email address	ad.leiston.p@talk21.com

Age group	3–10
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Introduction

Inspection team

Graham Preston

Additional inspector

Christine Murrell

Additional inspector

Ken Parry

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 10 teachers in 23 lessons as well as carrying out a number of 'learning walks' to listen to pupils read, evaluate the quality of pupils' writing and observe the teaching of phonics. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning. Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers in 31 returned questionnaires.

Information about the school

This was formerly a first school and recently became a 3 to 11 primary school as part of local reorganisation. The older pupils have yet to reach Year 6 though attainment in the current Year 5 indicates they will meet government floor standards by the time they leave. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with ten per cent from other ethnic heritages. The school has a higher than average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the proportion of those known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school runs a daily breakfast club and after-school club. It has several awards including the Activemark for sport, the Eco School Bronze award and Healthy Schools status. There is an adjoining Children's Centre that is separately managed and subject to separate inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Leiston is a good school that enables its pupils to achieve well because of good and improving teaching, careful tracking of pupils' progress and effective additional learning support. It is good rather than outstanding because there are still inconsistencies in teaching and assessment practice.
- Pupils make good progress throughout their time in school. The oldest pupils, now in Year 5, are reaching average or better standards in mathematics and English. Above average standards in reading are evident across all years.
- Pupils enjoy being at school and are fully engaged in their learning. Pupils behave well and attend regularly with low levels of unauthorised absence. Parents appreciate the positive and caring school ethos and pupils feel safe and well supported.
- Teachers and support staff are effective in helping pupils develop their basic skills, particularly when they first come to school. Strong teaching of phonics, which links letters and sounds, helps pupils develop good reading skills. Lessons are mostly well planned. Marking is regular and encouraging, but does not consistently show pupils how they can improve. Teaching and assessment practice are good overall, but teachers do not always provide well-matched learning activities and targets in lessons.
- The school is well led, staff morale is high and there is a readiness by all to rigorously monitor and review all practice. The senior leadership evaluates the quality of teaching accurately and clear performance targets are improving teaching quality. Middle leaders work with colleagues to improve provision in different subjects and develop a curriculum that successfully enriches pupils' experience and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The drive to improve standards is evident in the successful Early Years Foundation Stage provision which ensures children make a good start to school. The now much-improved use of data to identify learning needs and the very

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good range of interventions and learning programmes are ensuring all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make similarly good progress. The governing body is well informed and increasingly active in developing the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain consistently good teaching and increase the amount of outstanding practice by:
 - providing clear and achievable learning tasks and targets in all lessons, shared with pupils and matched to their needs
 - ensuring all marking provides opportunities for pupils to improve their work and shows them how they can make progress in terms of their National Curriculum targets.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The careful assessment of children coming into Nursery shows that many of them start with development well below that expected for their age. The effective learning support and wide range of stimulating activities in both Nursery and Reception classes enable children to make the good progress evident in their learning journals. Standards are still below age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils move into Year 1 but closer to the national average.

Well-taught phonics sessions, which show pupils how letters and sounds are linked, are evident in most years. These daily sessions help pupils make particularly good progress in their reading so that most pupils can read fluently by Year 5. Pupils' writing develops well in Years 1 and 2 as was evident in a Year 2 class where the more-able pupils produced accurate extended writing about a magic carpet trip that demonstrated creativity and confident use of language. Rates of progress in writing are a little more uneven in subsequent years though good overall. Progress in mathematics accelerates as pupils get older with pupils making significant gains in their skills and understanding in Years 4 and 5. For example, in a middle ability set, pupils demonstrated secure skills in multiplication using the grid method with some making exceptional progress, evident in a review of their books over the year. Year 5 pupils are currently attaining at least those levels expected for their age in both English and mathematics with some pupils doing considerably better.

The school closely monitors and supports individuals' progress and there is no consistent difference between boys and girls. All members of the substantial additional learning support team have specialist skills in one-to-one and small group tuition which enable disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make better than average progress than their peers nationally. Parents are

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appreciative of the good support for learning and almost all agree that their children are making good progress.

Quality of teaching

Inspectors found that a large majority of the teaching and learning across the school was effective in helping pupils make good progress and parents are similarly positive about the quality of teaching. However, there is some variation in the quality of teaching and assessment as the school expands to accommodate the upper age groups. Well thought-out and exciting learning activities in Nursery and Reception classes help children develop their independence and creativity. During a lesson seen, classroom staff made good use of a play session, using effective questions to get children to talk about and develop their activities. Assessment of children's progress was also done well, recording their responses and development of skills.

Teaching of phonics is good in most years and was well illustrated in Year 2 where very good use of skilled teaching assistants enabled the teachers to create four teaching groups matched to pupils' capabilities. Lessons in most years are well planned, make effective use of questioning to develop understanding and capture pupils' interest. Staff have had success with some pupils initially less engaged in their learning through the development of a topic-based curriculum to develop literacy and numeracy and this is now used as the major vehicle to develop pupils' writing.

Teachers have been effective in developing higher level subject knowledge now that they teach pupils up to Year 6. This was evident in a Year 5 science lesson where pupils were benefiting from well prepared and challenging teaching about muscle function. Teachers do not always specify clear learning outcomes, appropriate for all pupils, which can be achieved in a lesson and which are shared with pupils. Nevertheless, the progress of pupils is carefully monitored and there are good quality learning support programmes that complement classroom teaching. Marking is regular but some teachers do not consistently show pupils how they can improve their work or give them sufficient opportunity to do so. Now that the school has older pupils who will take end of Key Stage 2 assessments, some teachers have been slow in showing pupils how they can improve against their National Curriculum targets.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave consistently well and the great majority like being in school. There is little unauthorised absence and attendance is average and improving. Pupils are considerate and show understanding of pupils who need additional behavioural and learning support. Pupils greatly appreciate the positive working atmosphere and eagerly grasp opportunities to participate actively in school affairs such as the school council, gardening club, various sports including swimming and the development of the school as an eco-community. They respond well to those sessions that support their social and emotional learning and sing with gusto in assemblies and as members of the school choir. These strengths were evident in an outstanding assembly on perseverance and reflection led by the headteacher. In lessons, pupils

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are attentive in whole class work, cooperate with each and stay on task. A large majority of parents and pupils feel that behaviour is typically good. Pupils say they feel very safe in school with little or no evidence of any type of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational needs. They appreciate the efforts staff make to deal with any worries and concerns and to ensure that there is a safe environment. The breakfast and after-school clubs are used well to support those pupils who attend them.

Leadership and management

The school leadership team has maintained the good pupil achievement identified in the last report and is ensuring, now as a primary school, that this progress is maintained in Years 5 and 6. Performance management is well established for all staff, including learning support staff, with clear personal targets related to further improvements in raising achievement. Through regular observations and learning walks, senior leaders rigorously monitor teaching and accurately identify areas for staff development. Joint observations with inspectors confirm they have an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses.

The considerable staff development programme includes preparation for teaching older pupils and developing phonics and various learning support programmes, which are strong areas of school provision. All staff are well acquainted with the school's system for tracking pupil progress. Those in the Early Years Foundation Stage use it very well to assess children's current development and their learning needs on entry to the school. Throughout the school the progress of individual pupils is closely tracked, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Good programmes are put in place for any pupil at risk of falling behind. Through this the school effectively promotes equality of opportunity ensuring that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do as well as others in the school and better than their peers nationally. There is no difference in boys' and girls' achievement and differences between year groups are quickly identified and effectively addressed. Middle leaders play an increasingly important part in improving standards and developing the curriculum.

The curriculum, both in lessons and whole school events and activities, strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is evident in the displays of pupils' work celebrating different cultures and religions, sports and music activities, discrete lessons in religious education and personal, social and health education, ecological activities and gardening. The topic-based curriculum also contributes effectively to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school meets all safeguarding requirements, with clear child protection procedures, and ensures that the school buildings are secure. The school works closely with family support workers and others to identify and effectively support any vulnerable or 'at risk' pupil through its nurture group. The governing body is both challenging and supportive and benefits from a number of well-informed representatives, some with considerable experience in the education sector. The development of leadership across the school, steady improvements in the teaching, learning support and

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continuing strengths in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have all contributed to an improving picture of pupil achievement. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustaining further improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leiston Primary School, Leiston, IP16 4JQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Your school gives you a good education, and ensures that most of you achieve well by the time you leave.

Almost all of you like coming to school and attend regularly. In lessons, we could see that you like to work together and are prepared to listen carefully to the teacher. We were impressed by your consistently good behaviour. The great majority of you say you feel safe in school and appreciate the help and support you receive. It was good to see how many of you enjoy sports, including swimming and like to get involved in different activities. We enjoyed one of your assemblies and were impressed by how well you all sang together!

The inspectors spent most of the time looking at how well you are making progress and what could be improved. Teachers do a good job of helping those of you in the different years to understand how you can use letter sounds to improve your reading. In most of the lessons we saw, the teacher and teacher assistant were doing a good job in helping you learn. To make teaching even better we have asked the school to ensure that the teacher shares with you what he/she wants you to know or do a little better by the end of the lesson. We were impressed with the care your teachers take to mark your work regularly and most explain what you need to do next to improve it. We have asked your teachers to give you more time to follow their suggestions and improve your work so you can better meet your reading, writing and mathematics targets. You can help by always taking care to read and follow your teachers' advice.

Thank you again for your help. Make sure you attend school regularly and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston
Lead inspector

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