

The Leverton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115282
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357725
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Kane
Headteacher	Louise Martin
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed nine teachers in 19 lessons. Meetings were held with governors, groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices and the school's self-evaluation and development planning. They also considered the questionnaire responses from 68 parents and carers and 100 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which the school and other data support the judgement that pupils' learning and progress are now at least good, particularly in writing.
- The key areas of school provision that are driving current school improvement.
- The involvement of all parties in leadership and management and the extent to which progress can be sustained with an imminent change in leadership.
- The degree to which the school is developing wider links as part of meeting the current requirements for community cohesion.

Information about the school

Leverton Junior is an average-sized school that serves the eastern district of Waltham Abbey. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with an increasing proportion coming from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There is a larger than average number of pupils at an early stage of English acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school runs a breakfast club for its own pupils and some from the adjoining infant school. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and is a training school as part of the local initial teacher training consortium.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school, which has successfully focused on improving standards and pupils' progress since the last inspection. It benefits from strong leadership provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, well supported by an effective mix of experienced and more recently qualified staff. Consequently, there is much well-established good practice to sustain school improvement in spite of the change in school leadership.

Over previous years pupils have started in Year 3 with levels of attainment below those found nationally and make good progress to reach at least national averages in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Consistently good learning and progress in all years, together with rising standards on entry, indicate a continuing rise in pupil attainment in future. Much of this improvement is as a result of rigorous progress tracking and target setting and a strong focus on improving basic skills, particularly writing. The careful school monitoring and support ensures that pupils with particular learning needs, or at an early stage of English language acquisition, progress as well as others. The school has established a purposeful and supportive learning context that engages the pupils and encourages them to apply themselves and act responsibly. Consequently pupils feel safe, behave well in lessons and attend school with better than average regularity. Many take roles of responsibility, and pupils demonstrate a commitment to healthy lifestyles, with every child participating in one or more sports activities and competitions.

Teachers and support staff work very hard to plan and deliver effective lessons that have a clear learning purpose and successfully engage pupils' interest. Higher ability pupils benefit from lessons that are challenging and encourage creativity, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants. However, where learning tasks are insufficiently clear and well-structured, middle ability pupils take time to get started. Marking is mostly good and the best practice provides pupils with clear 'next steps' guidance for improvement, but this is not used consistently across the school. The curriculum has a number of key strengths that include a focus on both improving literacy and numeracy and developing a creative, thematic approach that actively involves pupils in their learning. Care and guidance is strong overall. Pupils with particular concerns are well supported and considerable attention is given to ensuring they are safe. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day for some pupils and almost all parents recognise the good work done in helping pupils settle in school and prepare for secondary school.

The school is well run by the senior leadership team, which has successfully involved staff in school leadership at all levels. Consequently, staff morale is high and there are well-established procedures for tracking and target setting, and shared approaches to lesson planning and the development of literacy and numeracy. The governing body is well informed and very supportive of the leadership team. It contributed significantly in terms

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of specialist support and management of the recently completed building extension that has considerably enhanced facilities and ensured a high level of school security. The school accurately evaluates its strengths and areas for development, having identified the need to better engage and communicate with parents and carers and develop community cohesion. The good curriculum helps pupils' cultural development but community cohesion is only partly developed, with wider national and other links still in the process of being established. Nonetheless, the leadership and management of the school has been effective in driving improvement in most areas and establishing procedures and practices to sustain good momentum for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Better engage all parents and carers by:
 - providing regular channels for communication
 - ensuring more frequent information to parents about pupils' progress, targets and ways in which they can support their child's learning.
- Ensure that teaching and assessment more consistently reflects the best practice in the school by:
 - providing in lessons clear and well-structured learning tasks, particularly for the average ability pupils
 - helping pupils better know the level they are working at through teacher feedback and assessment.
- Help pupils' awareness and appreciation of the wider United Kingdom and the global community by:
 - developing links with other schools and organisations that enable more direct contact and experience.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Over the last three years, pupils have consistently attained standards at least in line with those nationally and on occasion above, particularly in mathematics. This represents good progress, as most started with below average attainment at the end of Year 2. These improvements in outcomes since the last inspection reflect good teaching and, in particular, the careful monitoring of pupil progress and use of extra support and resources to tackle any underachievement. The careful tracking of each class shows that all but a few pupils are on track to achieve expected or better levels in English and mathematics. Consequently, future attainment for those pupils at the end of Year 6 is on target to be above average. The school's careful tracking of pupils shows that all groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make similarly good progress.

Learning in lessons reflects this positive picture. An outstanding lesson in Year 6 involved a study of ancient Greek schools and enabled pupils to demonstrate a range of research, problem solving and mathematical skills in carrying out their investigations, as well as confidence and skill in presenting their ideas. The lesson fully engaged and extended all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very evident in their growing confidence and maturity and readiness to participate in lessons. Many of the pupils are able to demonstrate healthy lifestyles by their active involvement in sports and understanding of healthy eating. Above average levels of attendance reflect their enjoyment of school and many pupils embrace opportunities to be actively involved in the school community as play leaders, monitors, paired readers and school council members.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are mostly well planned with a clear purpose shared with the pupils. Learning is organised well and teachers provide much active learning, such as role-play and investigation, that pupils enjoy and in which they make good progress. Information and communication technology (ICT), including interactive whiteboards, is well used, particularly in lesson introductions. Most lessons are challenging and often encourage pupils to work with more independence, though some need the tasks broken down and better explained. Marking is regular and positive. The best practice tells the pupils what they need to do next to improve and links their learning to National Curriculum levels, though this has yet to develop across the school.

The considerable work to improve the curriculum is evident in varied and interesting work schemes and focuses on providing opportunities to improve basic skills, especially writing. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in French, art, ICT, science and physical education

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as well as sports coaching and activities made possible by the sports partnership. There are intellectually challenging opportunities for gifted and talented pupils and others to be involved in the philosophy club or participate in problem solving such as designing a sports stadium.

The positive outcomes in terms of pupil attitudes, attendance and improved behaviour, all reflect the effective care and guidance provided by the school. A number of parents express concern about the behaviour of some pupils. However, the school has considerable success in improving behaviour and supporting particular families and pupils through its family support worker and the school nurse, as well as the various social and welfare agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The head teacher and deputy headteacher successfully drive school improvement, reflected in significantly better standards of attainment and provision. The greater sharing of leadership responsibilities has enabled others to lead the development of literacy and numeracy across the school and coordinate a move to a more creative and engaging thematic curriculum. Governance is effective, with considerable strengths in the careful monitoring of all policies and their implementation. This is most evident in the good safeguarding provision, where there has been considerable investment in controlled access to the school and safer play equipment outside. The governing body also shouldered much of the responsibility for the new building work, including budgeting. Overall, the governing body has a good understanding of the school through its regular contact with the senior leaders, though it is less closely involved in helping formulate the school strategic plan.

The school uses most of the usual means of communicating with parents and carers, including use of email, newsletters, bulletins, the school website and daily contact with teachers at the start of each day. However, the school has struggled to recruit parent governors, there is no current parent association and its efforts to engage all parents and carers, including those harder to reach, has had mixed success. The school tracking system is used well to monitor the performance of all pupils and to intervene with additional learning and support to narrow any significant gaps in performance between groups of pupils. There are no consistent differences between how well girls and boys perform, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities reach expected or better levels of attainment This demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity. The drive to improve pupil outcomes has resulted in a modest focus on establishing wider links within the United Kingdom and elsewhere so community cohesion

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is only satisfactory. However, links with the local community and with the various outside agencies are strong in both protecting and guiding children and enhancing and improving provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers are positive about the school, although there was a small but significant number of questionnaires with negative responses. The key concern for many is the behaviour of some pupils. The school does have its share of potentially challenging pupils, but, during the inspection, inspectors found behaviour to be good in all lessons and outside, though there was some good-natured liveliness in younger classes. Both the parent and pupil questionnaires indicate a small minority of pupils not liking school, although this was not noticeable in the classroom or in an analysis of class progress charts, which show very few pupils making less than expected or better progress. Some parents and carers also have concerns about their child's progress and being kept informed. Inspectors believe there is a need for the school to more regularly inform and make contact with parents and carers, to address quickly any concerns and make parents and carers aware of the school improvements being made.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Leverton Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	37	37	54	5	7	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	31	46	34	50	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	28	44	65	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	29	40	59	5	7	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	20	29	41	60	6	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	25	44	65	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	28	47	69	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	24	43	63	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	25	39	57	6	9	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	26	28	41	10	15	7	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	21	36	53	6	9	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	16	24	39	57	4	6	4	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	29	39	57	6	9	3	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



16 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Leverton Junior School, Essex, EN9 3BE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. It gives you a good education, and ensures that you make good progress. The school makes a considerable effort to ensure you are safe and you behave well and work together in lessons. We were also pleased with what the school is doing to help you develop healthy lifestyles and were very impressed that all of you take part in one or more sports activities and competitions. Also good is your willingness to take on different responsibilities as a monitor, play leader or school council member.

The great majority of you like coming to school and attend regularly. It is certainly true that most of you get on with your teachers and want to do well. Your teachers make considerable efforts to plan interesting lessons that you enjoy. However, we noted that some of you did not always know what the teacher wanted you to do in a lesson and we have asked them to be a little clearer. Some teachers are good at telling you what National Curriculum level you are working at and giving you 'next step' guidance to help you improve. We think this is very useful and have asked the school to ensure all teachers do this. Finally, while lessons and assemblies help you know about other religions and cultures, we want the school to increase links with other areas of the United Kingdom and abroad to develop your knowledge and experience further.

The headteacher, governors and staff do a good job at improving the school. We want the school to communicate more often with your parents and carers so they can give their views and gain a better understanding of what the school does and how well you are doing. You can all help to further improve the school and your own progress by maintaining your good attendance and taking an active part in lessons.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead Inspector

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