

Leasowe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105055
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	355691
Inspection dates	5–6 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jack Thomas
Headteacher	Mr Roger Flaherty
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons or parts of lessons were observed involving seven teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and 10 parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, school assessments, planning and school policies, including those concerning the safeguarding of pupils. Sixty-three questionnaires returned by parents or carers and Key Stage 2 pupils' questionnaires were read and analysed. Staff also completed a questionnaire.

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

- Why achievement in mathematics appears to be not as good as in English in Key Stage 2.
- How well pupils in Key Stage 1 classes are doing.
- How robust all aspects of safeguarding are and what the school is doing to promote good attendance.
- Whether provision and leadership and management are strengths of the school as the school judges in its self-evaluation.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is twice the national average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low and very few of these are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school runs an early morning Toast Club for pupils. It has the Activemark and Healthy School status.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils. They make consistently good progress in each year group and achieve well in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment is in line with the national average by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very few who are learning English as an additional language, also make good progress. In recent years attainment in English in Year 6 has been consistently better than that in mathematics. This is partly accounted for by the successful focus the school has given to improving skills of reading and writing since the last inspection. Mathematics has not had as much attention and consequently teaching has not been so successful at developing pupils' understanding and skills in this subject. Pupils' personal development is good. They develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. The behaviour of the overwhelming majority of pupils is rarely less than good. A few pupils display challenging behaviour and the school caters for their needs effectively. Attendance is at the lower end of broadly average for primary schools nationally. Procedures to monitor attendance are thorough and sanctions, including legal proceedings, are used when appropriate. However, there remains a small core of hard-to-reach parents and carers in matters of school attendance.

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. All staff, including teaching assistants, relate well with pupils and their teaching stimulates the pupils' enthusiasm for learning very effectively. Staff go to considerable lengths to present pupils' work attractively by mounting colourful, exciting displays in all rooms and corridors. This sense of pride and achievement is very much at the heart of why the pupils enjoy school. The curriculum is similarly effective in capturing the imagination of pupils through topics that cover several subjects. The care, guidance and support for pupils provided by the staff are good, especially for the more vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs.

Since the last inspection, leadership and management have improved. There is a much greater involvement of middle managers in supporting the drive of the headteacher and deputy headteacher to make improvements. Their accurate evaluations of how well the school is performing are based on a comprehensive analysis of pupils' performance in all year groups and good monitoring procedures. The governing body supports the school effectively. However, some of its members who are new to their roles have training needs and have yet to become fully familiar with life in school. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection when outcomes, provision and school leadership were all found to be satisfactory. Consequently, the school has demonstrated its good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the drive to raise standards in mathematics by:

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- developing the pupils' understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary
- providing more opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems from everyday contexts
- giving pupils greater guidance on how they can improve their skills, for example through teachers' marking.
- Seek further ways to ensure all parents and carers fully understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and so improve the poor record in these areas of a very small minority of pupils.
- Develop the expertise of the governing body, especially those new to their role, by:
 - providing relevant training
 - improving links between the members of the governing body and the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy lessons very much and make good progress. Most children start in the Reception class with skills that are well below expected levels. They make good progress, though most are still working towards the early learning goals by the end of the year, especially in key areas of learning, such as communication, language and literacy, writing and calculating. In current Key Stage 1 classes, pupils' progress is good, thanks to effective teaching. This has not been the case in every year since the last inspection but improvements in leadership and team work in the key stage are bearing fruit and pupils' attainment is rising. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is good, especially so in English. In mathematics, staff have identified that pupils require a better understanding of the language of the subject to do really well. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and the great majority present their work neatly in folders and exercise books. They are confident to make suggestions and answer questions in lessons, and particularly enjoy practical activities, such as science investigations. Pupils in Year 1, for example, were fascinated looking through magnifiers and splitting flower stems to see how flowers take in water. Staff monitor the progress of all groups of pupils closely and there is no trend of under-achievement in any particular group.

Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They are proud of their school and look after the building with its many facilities very well. The school council makes a good contribution to decision-making. For example they helped organise equipment for use at playtimes. The pupils' contribution to the wider community is satisfactory. A promising recent initiative has been for the school council to join other schools in planning how various spaces in the neighbourhood may best serve the community. The great majority of pupils are punctual and attend school regularly. Most pupils take part in after-school clubs, including a very popular street dancing club, which has been taken up with gusto by both girls and boys. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils frequently organise their own fund-raising events for charity.

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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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?

The quality of teaching and the curriculum have improved since the last inspection. Lessons are well planned to cater for the needs of different groups of pupils and have good pace. Teachers' use of information and communication technology (ICT) is becoming increasingly sophisticated. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils have access to a virtual learning platform that they can use at home as well as in school. Pupils in Year 5 posted their own comments on the website about a piece of writing based on the novel, *Great Expectations*. These were shared with everyone through the interactive whiteboard and later pupils composed their own descriptive writing for posting on the site. Teachers provide excellent feedback to pupils when they mark their work in English but guidance is not as thorough in mathematics.

The curriculum for basic literacy skills is good. Strategies for teaching reading and writing are well embedded and there are several very effective programmes of support and intervention for individual pupils in literacy and numeracy, which are led by teaching assistants. However, one aspect of the mathematics curriculum, problem solving, currently receives too little attention. The curriculum has been enhanced by the adoption of elements of the International Primary Curriculum. Pupils' personal development is promoted well by lessons in personal, social and health education and circle time when pupils discuss issues together. There is a good range of after-school clubs and a residential visit that add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils know who to turn to if they

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have any concerns and staff care for all pupils well. The special educational needs coordinator takes a valuable lead in all matters of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The management of their welfare is very effective. The school runs a successful early morning club, the Toast Club, to help working parents and carers and encourage punctuality. Arrangements for pupils to transfer into school and on to secondary school are good.

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 headteacher has made excellent use of training opportunities to enhance the leadership skills of middle managers so that they contribute well to all aspects of school self-evaluation and forward planning. There is a shared pride in and vision for the school which are helping to lift standards and enthuse pupils. The monitoring of teaching and learning through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the tracking of pupils' progress is thorough and effective. This has led, for instance, to a focus in the current school development plan on narrowing the gap between attainment in English and in mathematics.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Recent retirements and resignations have led to the appointment of new members, who are keen to do well but have training needs. Partnerships with other agencies and schools and those with parents and carers benefit the pupils' learning well. For example, the school uses particularly effectively the services of outside agencies to help families under stress and pupils with additional needs. Child protection measures, risk assessments and health and safety procedures are good. Pupils report they feel safe and their parents and carers endorse this view. The school promotes equal opportunity for pupils effectively and is vigilant in tackling discrimination. For instance, pupils who have no access to the internet at home can still take part in the virtual learning experience by attending an after-school club. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The international dimension of the curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' curiosity about the wider world and there are plans for links with schools in other localities.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

All aspects of provision and outcomes have been maintained at the good level found at the last inspection. In addition, the outdoor area for the children has been enhanced and provides very good opportunities for imaginative play, physical exercise and creative activities. Most children have attended the nearby Early Years Excellence Centre before joining the Reception class and so they start well used to nursery routines. They cooperate happily with one another and their teacher. Some children have specific developmental, medical or emotional needs and are supported very well by additional staff. Many children's skills of communication, language and literacy and pencil control are very limited on entry to school. Staff provide good opportunities for the children to practise and improve these skills through opportunities to paint and draw and take part in imaginative play. Teaching is good and activities are chosen to suit the needs and interests of the children. In addition, there is effective teaching of letters and sounds so that all children grasp the links well through classroom displays, as well as songs, chants and rhymes. The year group is well led and managed by the class teacher, who is also a member of the senior management team. Staff have a thorough knowledge of individual children's skills and they record their progress systematically for sharing with parents and carers and the Year 1 teacher. Links with the pre-school provider and with the Year 1 staff are very good and the transition between classes is smooth, the two classrooms being adjacent to one another.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

In terms of the number of questionnaires returned, the response was greater than most inspections of primary schools. Almost all the parents and carers who responded expressed highly positive views of the school. This was also true of some parents and carers that the lead inspector spoke to. They are proud of the school and find the staff welcoming. They greatly value the work of the school in helping their children to make good progress. They appreciate the work of the headteacher and all staff in helping their children to have a love of learning. They have enjoyed courses for parents and carers that the school has organised. Inspectors endorse these opinions while noting that there is scope for improvement in the standards that the pupils reach in mathematics. The inspection team considers parents' and carers' positive views are a reflection of the successful partnerships the school has with them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Leasowe Primary 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 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 143 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	70	16	25	2	3	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	48	76	13	21	1	2	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	70	17	27	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	63	20	32	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	44	70	18	29	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	65	20	32	0	0	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	56	25	40	1	2	1	2
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)	32	51	27	43	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	59	24	38	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	54	24	38	3	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	48	32	51	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	36	57	25	40	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	70	15	24	0	0	1	2

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.



7 April 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Leasowe Primary School, Wirral, CH46 1RU

It was a great pleasure to visit your school and its beautiful modern building. You were all extremely friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how you are getting on. On behalf of the inspection team I would like to share with you what we found.

Your school is providing you with a good education. Your behaviour is good and this means you learn well. Your awareness of how to keep safe is good. You take on responsibilities well, such as the work done by the school council. You make good progress in lessons and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, most of you reach the standards expected in English and mathematics. This is because the teaching you receive is good and you work hard. You told us how proud you are of your school and you enjoy topic work and activities such as after-school clubs. School leaders do a good job. The staff take good care of you all so that you feel safe. They make sure you are not put at risk.

Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. There are two improvements for staff to make.

■ Help you to do as well in mathematics as you do in English by:

- making sure you understand mathematical vocabulary, words such as inverse and polygon, so that you use them correctly
- giving you mathematical problems to work out that concern everyday matters, such as how much money a family will need for a trip to the seaside
- marking your work so that you understand the next steps in learning.

■ Find further ways to make sure that your attendance at school is good.

There is something for the school governors to do as well. New members need more training so that they can do a good job.

Please attend school regularly, continue to work hard and enjoy school. I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Carruthers

Lead Inspector

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