

Lime Walk Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117333
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358124
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Piper
Headteacher	Angela Belgrove
Date of previous school inspection	10 April 2008
School address	Lime Walk Hemel Hempstead HP3 9LN
Telephone number	01442 262341
Fax number	01442 211218
Email address	admin@limewalk.herts.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Inspection number	358124

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw six teachers teaching 13 lessons. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to classrooms, saw two assemblies and carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work. They met with the headteacher, school inclusion manager, two subject coordinators, three members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and two groups of older pupils. The team observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including school assessment data and policies relating to safeguarding. They also analysed the 81 responses to the questionnaire for parents and carers.

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

- What do the school's assessment and monitoring data say about the current progress of all pupils and key groups?
- How does the school foster pupils' independence as learners? Are there good opportunities for speaking and listening to support writing and bilingual learners?
- What evidence is there of progress against key issues identified in the last inspection and the work of the school's leadership to accelerate progress and raise attainment?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school roll is enriched by pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds so that the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority pupils is high. The largest group is British Pakistani pupils, many of whom do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also high. Ten percent of the school's roll is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The proportion with statements detailing their educational needs is below average. More pupils enter or leave at other than normal times than is generally seen. There have been significant ongoing staff changes and staffing difficulties over the past two years. At the time of the inspection one class was being covered by a short-term supply teacher. The school is fully staffed for September 2011.

The school has gained Healthy School status, Activemark and the Bronze Eco award for its work on 'green' issues.

As part of the Hemel East ring of extended schools, parents and carers have access to adult learning, parenting courses and a family support worker. The school operates a breakfast club and Nursery lunch club, both of which operate during term time.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Good leadership is steering the school effectively through a period of staffing changes and has ensured that the school continues to improve since it was last inspected. It provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are, however, many good features.

The proportion of pupils gaining the expected levels in English and mathematics is a little below but close to average. The proportion gaining the expected level in both subjects is somewhat below average. Overall, this represents satisfactory progress and achievement over pupils' time in school from their below average starting point. Some pupils achieve well. Attainment in reading is higher than writing and both are higher than mathematics.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation stage at an earlier stage of development than is generally seen, particularly in their early writing and number skills. They make satisfactory progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage but their early number and writing skills remain significantly below average when they leave. This is because they have insufficient opportunities to develop these skills, particularly in the Reception class, to enable them to make good progress.

The school fosters pupils' personal development well. Improvements to the curriculum have resulted in an improvement in pupils' behaviour, engagement and interest in learning. Behaviour is good; pupils enjoy school. This is reflected in their above average attendance. The school's leadership has established a clear framework in which learning can take place. The environment is stimulating; the ethos warm, welcoming and friendly and pupils feel safe and secure because they know that adults care for them. This is reflected in often small ways - the smile of a greeting, the flowers on the dining rooms tables. The school is a cohesive community. Pupils get on well with each other, respecting others' backgrounds and recognising and applauding the achievements of others, particularly appreciating when an individual has had to work hard to overcome specific difficulties.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory; both are improving. There is a strong core of good teaching. However, teaching has neither been stable nor consistently good enough to ensure that over time pupils make good year-on-year progress. The evident good features seen in a core of teaching in the use of assessment are not yet consistently embedded across the school.

The headteacher knows the pupils and the school very well so that the school's self-evaluation, including the evaluation of teaching and learning, is mostly very accurate. The leadership's reflective, systematic approach and sustained focus on learning have led to ongoing improvements in teaching and improved progress and attainment, particularly in English. Subject leaders have an accurate perception of the next steps needed to raise attainment. Although the headteacher is currently a key pivotal figure, nevertheless, given

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

the improvements which have taken place against a background of changing staff, there is good capacity to sustain improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics across the school by ensuring that children in Reception are supported to make good progress and gain a firm foundation in these aspects by providing more structured opportunities within the class to develop and reinforce these skills.
- Develop consistent, good teaching across the school by:
 - sharing good practice
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment to identify where pupils are in their learning and to inform their planning
 - enabling pupils to know what to do in order to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy learning so that they approach their work with enthusiasm, often 'hooked' by the practical nature of the task. They concentrate well although can become fidgety if they are on the carpet too long or grow bored if the activity is insufficiently challenging. Generally they listen well to their teachers and each other. Pupils are confident to give extended answers and there are good opportunities in lessons to share and rehearse their ideas and present to the class. Pupils make good use of displays to support their work and they work well in groups such as in a music lesson where there were good opportunities for cooperative learning. Pupils learn to use technical vocabulary and write for a range of audiences and purposes. In one lesson, older pupils were challenged to think logically and systematically in their approach to a mathematics problem relating to the Olympic rings.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are enabled to make similar progress to their peers. Individual pupils achieve well. Above all the school responds well to the individual, often overlapping needs of each pupil in a systematic fashion. Through careful questioning, encouragement and praise, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are encouraged to think through a problem, and develop and use appropriate strategies thus fostering their independence. When appropriate, problems are simplified to ensure progress in small steps. There are carefully targeted interventions to support their progress. Pupils with behavioural issues are well managed and they make good progress because adults manage behaviour in a consistent fashion. In one case, the teacher effectively anticipated difficulties so that there was minimal disruption to the class. Most parents and carers judged the school effective in managing occasional incidents of poor behaviour.

Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in developing spoken language skills because of the formal work in lessons, phonics and the informal opportunities in classes and the playground. This allows them to access the curriculum effectively. In addition, bilingual teaching assistants also provide additional support for pupils, parents and carers. Pupils who arrive in school at other than normal times often

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

come because of difficulties of one kind or another in their previous school. Careful induction ensures that they are quickly absorbed into the school's ethos to enable them to settle and make progress.

The percentage of pupils gaining the higher National Curriculum levels shows improvement this year and is closer to average, reflecting the additional challenge and support for more-able pupils. There is no discernable difference in the attitude or progress of boys and girls in lessons.

Pupils are very aware and knowledgeable about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. Pupils have a voice in the school through the school council, influencing decisions about school life and sharing with the governing body their views about the curriculum and learning. Their compassion is reflected in their various fundraising activities. Given the pupils' personal development and academic skills, they have a sound foundation on which to build in their next school.

The school fosters pupils' self-esteem well, developing their skills of empathy and awareness of their own and other's feelings. They understand the need for school rules and have the opportunity to reflect on their own lives and the lives of others. The school is a very cohesive community in which pupils develop respect for others' values and beliefs aided by their visits to other faiths places of worship.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
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

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

How effective is the provision?

Staff have warm relationships with the pupils, promoting their confidence. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are therefore confident in more open-ended situations. Often 'real' or creative approaches add relevance and interest to the tasks. Teaching assistants are skilled, provide a source of additional stability and make effective contributions to pupils' learning. Clear objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what their teacher is looking for. There are also clear opportunities for pupils to talk about their work and a rich spoken language-environment. Teachers make good use of technology to show and encourage pupils to talk about their own or other pupils' work. Teachers' often enthusiastic, energetic approach, along with a sense of fun, helps to keep pupils on task or motivates them further.

Where learning slows and teaching is satisfactory or inadequate, it is because assessment has not informed the planning sufficiently to ensure that the pitch of work provides sufficient or appropriate challenge to pupils to move them on. On occasion too, the pace of learning also slows because pupils are kept too long listening to the teacher, limiting the role of the teaching assistant. There are good examples of marking providing high quality feedback to pupils so that they are very clear how to improve their work but this is not yet a consistent feature.

The creative curriculum which has developed since the last inspection includes many cross-curricular links, interests the pupils and opens the door to many new learning experiences. Along with various good enrichment activities, it enhances learning and pupils' personal development; it provides a wide range of opportunities for success, fostering pupils' confidence and independence. There is a good range of intervention programmes and support to meet the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties. The emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills within the classrooms supports pupils with English as an additional language well. The school has developed a range of partnership activities with the local secondary school which add breadth to the provision.

There are rigorous procedures to follow up unexplained absence. Support for pupils is well targeted, resulting in significant improvement in individual pupils at risk of underachievement, where the school has clearly made a difference. There are good links with specialist support agencies to support the school's work with individuals. During breakfast club pupils across the age-range play and chat happily together. They enjoy the good range of activities, different every day, and the simple, appropriate breakfast food. There are good relationships between the pupils and adults, providing warmth and rapport.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff are proud to be members of the school. They feel valued, know what the school is trying to do and feel part of that process. Teamwork, despite the staff changes, is therefore strong and staff share the headteacher's commitment to ongoing improvement. The headteacher is skilled in developing the staff's strengths and there is a professional, reflective ethos.

A key improvement since the last inspection is the very good use of the school's assessment and monitoring data, which are used well in regular progress meetings to identify early those pupils requiring additional support, evaluate the success of initiatives and to judge the impact of teaching over a period of time. It is also used very effectively to identify aspects for further improvement in teaching and learning which is then translated into specific developments. The school's leadership tackles issues systematically, with a sustained, assiduous focus on learning and teaching so that pupils' progress continues to improve.

The governing body has improved since the last inspection. It ensures that the school meets statutory requirements and is increasing its participation in decision making. Governors are supportive of the school and have good first-hand information to question and query decisions. New governors are developing confidence in their role. There is close attention to the health and safety of staff and pupils. Safeguarding is good because clear policies are reviewed regularly in the light of experience; training is up-to-date and risk assessments rigorous.

The school is highly inclusive and promotes equal opportunities well. It monitors the performance of all pupils carefully and takes effective, systematic action to close the gap between the performances of specific groups. The school has put good strategies in place to support specific groups of pupils such as improving boys' reading, and the focus on speaking and listening to enhance the learning of pupils who speak English as additional language.

The school is a very cohesive community and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds respect and get on well with each other. The school knows its local community well. Much work has been done to develop good relationships with parents, carers and their families through 'Dads' Days' and the like to establish a strong sense of belonging and the school as a focal point within the community. The school wants to establish links with other schools in the United Kingdom and abroad but has yet to do so.

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

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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's progress is satisfactory. It is stronger in the Nursery than Reception. There is good progress in developing pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils are happy and settled, curious and enjoy learning. The wide range of independent activities develop independent play and behaviour is generally good because staff use consistent strategies to encourage good behaviour.

The environment is welcoming and vibrant. It is equipped with some high quality resources providing a wide range of activities to cover all the areas of learning, particularly appropriate for the children in the Nursery but not always providing sufficient challenge for Reception children. This is because there are not frequent enough opportunities for Reception children to develop early writing and number skills and missed opportunities to challenge the older children further. Adults recognise the individuality of each child and constantly interact well with them; questioning is often of high quality. This, along with clear modelling of good, clear speaking, and listening attentively to what the children have to say, develops not only warm, caring relationships between staff and children, but also provides a rich spoken language-environment. This supports children learning English as an additional language well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The development plan identifies priorities, including a review of assessment and planning. Staff are well-trained and work well together as a cohesive team, ensuring that the children's welfare needs are met. The leadership has established good partnership with parents and carers, who are regularly invited in to review their children's work. There are also good partnerships with a wide range of outside agencies that have helped support some children with specific needs.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of responses from parents and carers was above average. The positive responses were also above average. Almost all parents and carers were happy with their child's experience at this school. Within that overall judgement, 13 parents and carers expressed some reservations or criticisms. The common thread was concern about the turnover of staff. The school is fully staffed from September 2011 and it is anticipated this will lead to a period of staffing stability. Eighteen parents and carers wrote positive comments about the school, stressing the school's warmth, how happy their child is at the school, the support from staff and the school's leadership.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lime Walk 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	60	31	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	61	32	39	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	63	28	34	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	50	36	44	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	55	32	39	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	50	35	43	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	54	35	43	2	2	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)	38	46	36	44	6	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	54	34	41	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	45	40	49	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	44	39	48	7	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	51	30	37	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	57	32	39	1	1	0	0

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lime Walk Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9LN

Thank you for making me and my colleagues so welcome in your school. I would like to thank in particular those pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. My colleagues were impressed by your thoughtful answers to their questions.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education. You make satisfactory progress and your attainment is close to that seen in many schools. Some of you make particularly good progress. You are right to feel proud of the school because there are many good features and it is helping you develop well as young people. Your behaviour is good. You feel safe and staff care a great deal about you. The school is very friendly and you clearly get on well with each other. I was impressed in assembly at your genuine appreciation of the achievements of other children in aspects of work that they found difficult.

Teachers have a range of skills. They clearly foster your enjoyment of school and learning because you do many interesting things. I have asked the headteacher to work with staff to ensure that in Reception you have more opportunities to develop your writing and number skills. I also asked her to ensure that staff share their skills so that teaching challenges you to make consistent, good progress across the school and that the marking and feedback you are given tells you how to improve your work.

You told me that the headteacher is doing a good job in the school. I agree with you. I am glad that you are confident to approach an adult if you feel troubled. The school continues to improve and the headteacher and staff are ambitious for the school and want you to do as well as you can. You can all help in this process by working hard, ensuring that the school stays a friendly place and making the most of the opportunities that it provides.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.