

# The Leys Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	101216
<b>Local authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376526
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	John Laver

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	376
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Norman
<b>Interim Headteacher</b>	John Masson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6–7 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Leys Avenue Dagenham Essex RM10 9YR
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8270 6470
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	376526



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## Introduction

Inspection team

John Laver

Additional inspector

Sharona Semlali

Additional inspector

Robert Miller

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent approximately 10 hours observing teaching, visiting 22 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, assessment and tracking information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 69 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as those returned by 41 pupils and 22 staff.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language are over twice the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is close to average. The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes.

In recent months, there have been several staff changes. These include the recruitment of several new teachers, an interim headteacher from September 2011, a new deputy headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher. Planning is well advanced for the school to become federated with a local school. The school is a Reading Recovery School, has the Healthy School award and has Olympics 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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- This is not a satisfactory school because, although the recently established interim leadership team has started to raise achievement, there has been a substantial gap between pupils’ progress compared with that of most pupils nationally for much of the time since the previous inspection. In addition, weaknesses in leadership and management over time mean that inadequacies in provision and outcomes have not been tackled.
- Too many pupils in different year groups have underachieved for too long. They are only now beginning to get on track to make the expected levels of progress by the time they leave school, especially in English and mathematics. The school has not taken sufficient advantage of pupils’ eagerness to learn. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, where expectations are higher, children make satisfactory progress.
- The quality of teaching over time has resulted in underachievement for all groups of pupils and remains inadequate. Despite some recent improvements, there are still inconsistencies in pace and challenge in lessons, the effectiveness with which teachers use assessment and the way teachers deploy support staff.
- Pupils behave very well. Attendance, although average, is improving and pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that they feel safe and well cared for, and parents and carers agree.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers has been inadequate over time. There is now commitment and purpose, but the interim leadership team has only been in place for a short time. Governors are now more aware of the need

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for improvement, but for too long the governing body was not knowledgeable or challenging enough to hold leaders to account. It was ineffectual in securing the improvements deemed necessary at the time of the previous inspection. The current monitoring and leadership of teaching, together with sound performance management, has started to have a positive impact with the assistance of external advice and support. However, the issues for improvement are essentially the same as at the previous inspection and the school has not demonstrated the capacity to bring about sustained improvement since that time.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics, so that pupils leave the school with at least average attainment, by ensuring a greater and more consistent level of challenge for all pupils, but particularly the more able.
- Improve the quality of teaching and thereby pupils' learning by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in all subject areas
  - improving the use of assessment, including marking and the use of pupils' targets, so that pupils have a clear idea of how they can improve their work
  - consistent and effective deployment of support staff to assist teachers in ensuring that all pupils, particularly those at risk of underachieving, make at least expected progress.
- Build on existing developments in leadership and management to secure the school's capacity to improve at a rapid pace through:
  - systematic and rigorous monitoring of teaching and pupils' achievement by all leaders and managers
  - frequent assessment of pupils' achievements that is linked with teachers' planning and expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - the governing body holding school leaders to account for pupils' performance.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress in the Nursery. This progress was seen at its best, for example, when children were observed excitedly learning how to compare measurements of snakes, while also practising their counting and language skills when singing the 'boa constrictor' song. After being in the Nursery, children make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year, where there is not always the same effective balance between activities generated by the teacher and those chosen by the children themselves.

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Pupils join Year 1 with levels of skill and knowledge higher than when they began school, but still below the national average.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, following a recent focus by the schools' leaders on driving up attainment and progress, pupils' achievement has begun to improve. The impact of this improvement is starting to counter the widespread and historic underachievement in the school. All groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, higher and lower attainers, and those speaking English as an additional language, have underachieved since the previous inspection. In addition, pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs have not made sufficient gains in learning, despite sometimes benefiting from individual support. Therefore, the inspection team do not endorse the view of the majority of parents and carers who believe that their children make good progress.

The children's reading is improving, partly through new resources, additional support for underachieving readers and a concerted effort to ensure that pupils spend more time reading every day. However, attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is below average. Many younger pupils read with limited confidence, accuracy and fluency, and acquire knowledge of letters and sounds too slowly.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy is below average, more so in some classes or year groups than in others. The standard of presentation in pupils' work is too variable and many pupils continue to make basic errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar. More able pupils enjoy discussion and opportunities to respond to teachers' questioning, as observed during the inspection. However, many pupils have difficulty transferring their speaking skills accurately into their written work.

Although improving, the development of pupils' independent learning skills is variable because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Inspectors observed pupils actively involved in learning; for example, when older pupils were parcelling out fruit in order to work out number problems in mathematics and when younger pupils developed their artistic talents on computers. However, these examples are not typical of pupils' experiences or achievement since the previous inspection.

### **Quality of teaching**

Although the quality of teaching is improving, it has been inadequate for too long and even now is typically inconsistent. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and the pace of learning is slow. Teachers' use of assessment is variable in quality. Teachers usually mark pupils' work conscientiously and pupils sometimes respond to the comments. Too often though the marking is overgenerous or does not give precise enough information to pupils on exactly how they can improve their work. Pupils have targets, but teachers do not use them sufficiently as part of everyday teaching to improve learning. Examples of good teaching were seen; for example in the Nursery when children were taken on 'a walk through the jungle', identifying different animals. The teacher made the lesson objectives very clear and made good links between various skills; for example reinforcing the counting of numbers at the

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same time as introducing new vocabulary. Good teaching was also observed in a mathematics lesson for older pupils where the teacher made good links with their previous learning, posed a high level of challenge, and got the pupils working well in pairs to discuss practical problems.

The teaching over time has not ensured that pupils learn the necessary skills and acquire the relevant knowledge across all the subjects in what is otherwise a reasonably broad curriculum. Teachers plan work designed to meet the needs of pupils of different levels of ability, but this is not consistently translated into effective classroom activities. Activities are frequently not challenging or well-paced to enable more able pupils to achieve their potential. In some lessons, teaching assistants provide good support for lower-attaining pupils, those who are disabled or have special educational needs, but at other times support staff are not proactive in assisting teachers.

Pupils are aware of variations in the quality of teaching. Most parents and carers believe that teaching is good, but inspectors found that teaching quality is only just beginning to address previous endemic weaknesses in pupils' achievement. The expectations of some staff are not sufficiently high to ensure pupils achieve as well as they should.

Teachers provide opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, good social development is promoted well through encouraging pupils to work collaboratively. Similarly pupils benefit from a range of visits and experiences to develop cultural awareness; for example, in the study of art.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Inspectors judged behaviour to be typically good as was the case at the previous inspection. The school has effective systems to promote good behaviour through rewards and positive messages that are reinforced in assemblies and lessons. Pupils' evident desire to learn is a feature of most lessons. Where achievement has been inadequate, it is not due to any unwillingness to learn on the part of pupils. They enjoy coming to school and they respond positively to good teaching. It is an orderly school, both during lessons, break times and lunchtimes. Pupils throughout the school are polite and welcoming to visitors. From the Nursery onwards, children learn the conventions of good behaviour and how to get on well together. A minority of pupils, parents and carers expressed some concerns that behaviour in school is not as good as it might be. Inspectors considered these views along with a range of other evidence before coming to their conclusion.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel very safe and well supported; a view confirmed by most parents and carers, and typical of pupils' experiences over time. Pupils are confident that any untoward behaviour will be dealt with effectively. School records show that there have been very few serious incidents of misbehaviour and little bullying of any sort. There have been no exclusions for some time and hardly any

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incidents of racist behaviour. Attendance has improved, although it is still just average because a minority of parents and carers do not appreciate the importance of regular attendance, despite the school's attempts to convince them of this. This is an inclusive school in the way that it offers good care to all pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

## **Leadership and management**

Since the previous inspection the actions of school leaders have had insufficient impact in tackling weaknesses. Inspectors acknowledge the hard work of the current interim leadership team in taking steps to counter a legacy of underachievement, but they do not endorse the view of most parents and carers that the leadership has been effective in providing the right education for their children.

The interim leadership team demonstrates a good understanding of the school's long-standing weaknesses and a genuine commitment to improvement. This is evident in the school improvement plan, which focuses on the most important areas such as improving achievement and teaching. Most staff share the desire for improvement, although a few do not consider that the school is well led or that their professional development is catered for effectively. Most parents and carers believe that the school is led and managed well, but a few consider that communications between home and school could be improved.

Strategies to strengthen teaching are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. A recent programme of professional development focused on increasing teachers' confidence and skill in teaching mathematics and opportunities to observe good practice. Regular assessments are now in place to better identify those pupils needing particular support. The school uses external support and advice provided by local schools to help establish good practice. However, the various initiatives are not sufficiently established to show sustained improvement in raising attainment.

Monitoring of teaching and learning has in recent months become more systematic and rigorous, and increasingly involves middle leaders such as subject coordinators, whose leadership roles are still developing. Governors now have a better understanding of why pupils underachieve, but have only recently become more challenging in their role of holding the school to account and are over-optimistic about the rate of improvement.

Leaders at all levels plan a curriculum that places a particular emphasis on developing numeracy and literacy, as well as providing a range of topics designed to engage pupils' enthusiasm and link various areas of learning. Opportunities to further pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development come, for example, from assemblies, visits and music tuition. However, there has been limited awareness of the need to ensure systematic progression in learning to meet pupils' academic needs. Therefore, the curriculum has not served pupils' needs well. The curriculum is



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managed well in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in the Nursery.

Arrangements to safeguard children meet requirements. Staff are trained in the relevant procedures and pupils talk knowledgeably about issues such as internet safety. The school is very inclusive in its determination to prevent discrimination and encourage community spirit.

## 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](http://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.**



10 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of The Leys Primary School, Dagenham, RM10 9YR**

Thank you for the polite and friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We found it very interesting talking to you and seeing you in lessons and around the school. We found that the school is not giving you a satisfactory education. Although your teachers care about you and want you to do well, for too long you have not done as well as you should. Therefore, the school needs special measures. This means it will get help to improve your education.

There are already some good things going on: you behave well, you told us that you feel safe in school, you get on well with each other and you like your teachers. Those of you in the Nursery make good progress. Some of you told us that you do not know enough about how well you are doing in your work. For some time your work has not been as good as that of pupils in most other primary schools.

The new leaders in school are beginning to help you make better progress and in order to improve further, we have asked them to take the following actions.

- Make sure that all of you, but particularly the most able, always get work which helps you build on what you already know so that you make much better progress in mathematics and English.
- Make sure that teachers give you enough guidance on exactly how to improve your work, that teachers support each other and that work is always of the right quality to help you do your best.
- Make sure that the school's leaders continue with the efforts already underway to improve your progress and to help the school improve rapidly.

You can help by continuing to work as hard as we saw you working during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Laver  
Lead inspector

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