

Leyland Methodist Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119400
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379792
Inspection dates	18–19 April 2012
Lead inspector	David Law

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Tomlinson
Headteacher	Kathryn Melling
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Law
Kirsty Haw
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors looked at teaching and learning in 24 lessons, during which the opportunity was taken to talk to pupils in class and look at work in their books. Eleven teachers were observed teaching. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and representatives of the local authority. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection. The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading journals. They scrutinised the work in pupils' books with a particular emphasis on English and mathematics. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at various documents including the school improvement plan and current assessments of pupils' progress. They received 142 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers in addition to 262 pupil questionnaires and 12 from staff.

Information about the school

Leyland Methodist is larger than the average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is broadly average. The large majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds and a very small proportion are from minority ethnic groups.

The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School status. The school has met the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

There have been several changes of headteacher since the previous inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2011.

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	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

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.
- The school is not satisfactory because pupils’ achievement is inadequate, teaching lacks challenge and leaders and managers are ineffective in driving improvement.
- Achievement is inadequate because pupils make too little progress from their starting points. Attainment on entry is well above average but the school fails to build successfully on this. There is significant underachievement in English.
- Teaching over time is ineffective in addressing underachievement because teachers’ use of assessment fails to ensure that pupils’ learning is matched to their different needs. Teachers’ marking does not help pupils to improve and they are unsure of their personal learning goals. In lessons, the pace of learning is too slow because time is not used efficiently.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils show sound attitudes to learning. They feel safe and attendance is above the national average.
- Leadership and management are inadequate because, since the previous inspection, essential improvements have not been made. Pupils still make insufficient progress in English. The more-able pupils still underachieve because the curriculum does not meet their needs and teaching does not challenge them. Middle leadership remains weak because the roles of individual leaders are unclear. Monitoring, evaluation, and performance management of staff are ineffective in tackling weak teaching. Despite the energy and commitment of the new headteacher, long standing weaknesses remain and recent gains are insecure. The school is not demonstrating it has the capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in English so that pupils of all abilities make at least expected progress by:
 - matching learning to pupils' different needs so they build sequentially on their prior learning
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to use their writing and reading skills across the curriculum
 - widening the breadth of reading to include fiction and non-fiction texts that enable pupils to acquire skills of inference and deduction
 - using reading journals purposefully, ensuring they are regularly marked and show pupils what they do well and what they should improve.
- Raise attainment for more-able pupils so they reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by:
 - raising expectations and providing consistently challenging teaching based on accurate assessments of pupils' needs
 - ensuring tracking information is used to identify and address any underachievement
 - widening opportunities for learning in practical ways that extend pupils' thinking and investigative skills.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that the majority is good or better and none is inadequate by:
 - ensuring assessment informs planning for learning so that pupils' work is relevant to their different needs and abilities
 - ensuring lessons challenge all pupils, especially the more-able pupils
 - marking pupils' work in a timely and regular manner so they understand what they do well and what they should improve
 - implementing learning targets that are shared with pupils, understood by them, and reviewed regularly
 - using time effectively so lessons begin promptly and move at a brisk pace to engage all pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing a leadership structure with clear roles for all leaders, but particularly middle and subject leaders, that focuses on tackling the most significant weaknesses
 - establishing regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and its impact on achievement over time, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with pupils about their personal targets
 - convening regular meetings to review pupils' progress and acting on the information to arrest any underachievement
 - ensuring performance management holds teachers to account for pupils' progress
 - providing training in assessment and the teaching of reading and writing
 - ensuring that the governing body has first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - ensuring parents and carers are well-informed about teaching, learning and the curriculum.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is inadequate because although they start Year 3 with attainment that is well above average, the school does not build successfully on this. By the end of Year 6, attainment is only broadly average. Pupils underachieve because learning is ineffectively matched to their needs and progress in lessons is not quick enough. Given the chance, for example during a music lesson which engaged their enthusiasm, pupils learn well. There are, however, too few opportunities for them to do so. Pupils are unsure how to improve because assessment is weak. In response to the pupils' questionnaire, one third did not know how well they were doing.

The 2011 national test results in English show that just over half of Year 6 pupils made expected progress. Their attainment in writing was below average. The current rate of learning in English remains inadequate. Pupils' work in books shows insufficient progress, particularly in writing: handwriting is often untidy, there are few examples of writing across the curriculum and the more able are not challenged. While, by the end of Year 6, overall attainment in reading is above average, this still represents inadequate progress from pupils' starting points. Most pupils enjoy books and read fluently but inconsistent teaching does not build on this and results in uneven progress and unfulfilled potential. The skills of inference and deduction are acquired too slowly and, where they do exist, pupils have too few opportunities to use them, for example through investigations. Furthermore, pupils' ability to reflect on their reading is restricted because reading journals lack purpose and are infrequently marked. However, the headteacher has taken a lead role by teaching a group of more-able pupils and they reach higher levels of attainment because more is expected of them. Pupils' books show uneven progress in mathematics. There are higher expectations of pupils in Years 3 and 4, but more-able pupils generally underachieve, particularly in Years 5 and 6. However, attainment in mathematics has improved recently and most pupils make better progress than in English.

More-able pupils receive too little challenge in lessons, which slows their progress. They spend too much time consolidating what they already know. In some lessons they find questions too easy and in others they finish tasks quickly because too little is expected of them. Overall, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also underachieve because learning is not matched to their needs, but this is less pronounced than for the more able and some individuals make satisfactory progress.

Some parents and carers feel their children make too little progress following a brisk start prior to entering the school. Inspection findings confirm this view. Despite pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their willingness to try their best, too few make the progress they should.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is inadequate because expectations are too low and assessment is ineffective in meeting pupils' needs. This steadily erodes achievement because pupils do not build consistently on prior learning. Pupils are unsure of the levels they are reaching and the use of targets to promote learning is poor. Despite examples of good practice, teaching is

inconsistent across classes and year groups. Expectations vary too much, as for example in the quality of teachers' marking, which is generally ineffective in showing pupils what to improve. Where expectations are higher, pupils rise to the occasion and make greater gains in their learning as a result. Some good subject knowledge is evident, for example in music, but unevenness in the quality of teaching means that pupils' progress is too inconsistent. Parents and carers commented on lessons lacking challenge and their children being bored. They feel the school does not help them to support learning at home. Inspection findings agree with this view.

Time in lessons is not used effectively: pupils listen to the teachers' input for too long and the pace of learning slows. Movement of pupils between sessions, for example when regrouping into ability sets for mathematics, wastes time and learning does not begin promptly. One group of pupils waited 15 minutes after the start of the lesson before they were taken to their class.

Overall, the teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is not promoting their satisfactory achievement, although some individuals do make sound progress due to the support from teaching assistants. The more-able pupils complete tasks that lack challenge. This is particularly evident in English where there are insufficient opportunities to apply writing skills.

The planning of learning across the whole curriculum is inadequate. Apart from the headteacher's group, the teaching of reading is ineffective in enabling pupils to build on prior learning because guided reading activities lack purpose. In the small number of lessons where there is sufficient challenge, for example in a geography lesson about coastal erosion, pupils respond enthusiastically. Teaching informs pupils about a range of faiths and beliefs, and this supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils feel safe and have a sound knowledge of how to stay safe. Parents and carers say their children are safe in school and inspectors found this to be an accurate view. Pupils are punctual in coming to school, but some lessons do not start promptly and teaching time is lost. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and are keen to help each other, for example at playtimes and in lessons when working together. Pupils understand school rules, doing their best to follow them so an orderly atmosphere prevails. Behaviour in lessons is rarely less than satisfactory and frequently good even when teaching is ineffective. Some parents and carers say they are unclear how the behaviour management system works. Pupils understand and respond appropriately to it but in questionnaire responses one third did not think behaviour is good. Bullying is rare and pupils are confident occurrences will be dealt with. There is a policy to tackle bullying but systems to monitor incidents are not well developed. Pupils show respect for others and this helps promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The spiritual dimension is particularly well provided for, including through school assemblies, which pupils enjoy.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate because there has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection. All recommendations made then are still areas for improvement now. Frequent changes of headteacher have contributed to the lack of a clear direction in driving school improvement. The current headteacher is taking measures

to rectify endemic underachievement, for example by taking on the leadership of English. This subject has had no leader for some time, exemplifying the gaps in middle leadership, a key issue at the last inspection. Middle leadership is ineffective in monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching. The structure of leadership responsibilities is not fit for purpose because roles are not focused on the most important priorities for improvement. This impedes efforts to raise pupils' achievement because too much depends on the headteacher.

A plan has been drafted to improve reading and assessment but it does not tackle weak teaching or writing. The governing body has managed various difficult personnel issues and established a committee to oversee pupils' performance but the impact of governors' work is not realised. Governors say staff morale was low but that there is currently a will to do better and they express a firm wish to raise ambition. However, these intentions, without a concerted strategy to directly tackle underperformance, particularly in teaching, are not raising pupils' attainment.

The school lacks a robust and effective cycle for self-evaluation, the review of pupils' progress and performance management for staff. Pupils' progress is tracked but meetings to review progress are not held frequently enough. Systems for performance management of staff have only recently been re-established and they lack rigour in holding teachers to account. Lessons are observed but too infrequently. The evaluation of teaching is too positive because it does not take sufficient account of pupils' learning. Training in the use of assessment has been provided but is not applied well enough to make a difference to teaching and learning.

The curriculum fails to promote achievement adequately because it does not meet the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly the more able, and all groups of pupils in English. Nor does it enable pupils to build on their skills as they move through the school because assessment is inconsistent. A few weaknesses have been addressed for example in mathematics, but gains are fragile and the school has depended on significant external support, particularly from the local authority.

Arrangements for safeguarding children meet statutory requirements. Leaders are not promoting equality satisfactorily because groups of learners make less progress than they should. Other forms of discrimination are suitably tackled through satisfactory provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders and managers have established productive links with the church.

Not all parents and carers feel the school keeps them well informed, with one fifth of the questionnaire replies stating this. Inspection findings agree with this view. For example, although there is a current policy for child protection, the copy on the school website is out of date.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



20 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leyland Methodist Junior School, Leyland PR25 3ET

Thank you for your welcome and for taking time to talk to inspectors when we recently visited your school. We found that most of you want to learn and that you feel safe in school. We were pleased to note your above-average attendance. However, your achievement remains low in English and more-able pupils do not achieve what they are capable of. Inspectors found that your school requires special measures because it is not doing as well as it should and needs extra support to help it improve quickly. This means that inspectors will visit the school regularly to see how well it is making progress. They will write a report after each visit so your teachers, parents and carers can see how things are improving.

We have asked the school's leaders, staff and governors to work on four main areas of the school's work. First, you should be achieving more in English, especially in writing. Second, we want to see higher expectations and greater challenge in lessons for more-able pupils. Third, we have asked the school to make sure teaching improves. When we saw you in good lessons we were impressed by the good progress you were making but we saw too many lessons where there was not enough progress because work did not meet your needs well enough, often being too easy. The marking of your work is not providing you with the accurate information you need to improve. The final thing is to make sure leaders carefully monitor what is happening and change things quickly when you are not learning as well as you should.

The teachers and leaders are going to be busy working on all these things. You can help by working hard in lessons and showing your best behaviour.

On behalf of the inspection team I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Law
Lead inspector

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