

Leigh Central Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106418
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	377399
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Lynne Read

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	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Tinsley
Headteacher	Yvonne Collinson
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lynne Read
Kirsteen Rigby

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. Two of these were joint observations with senior teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school leaders and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school's documents for self-evaluation and safeguarding. They also studied standards in reading, pupils' workbooks and the tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress. Inspectors considered the 66 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools. It meets the current floor standards which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Around one third of pupils come from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language. In total, 14 different languages are spoken among the pupils. A higher than average number of pupils are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. A much larger than average proportion of pupils enters the school part way through their education, some of whom are new arrivals to the country. The school holds the Sports Active Mark and Artsmark awards and has Healthy School status.

A Sure Start Children's Centre and two community pre-schools, (one of which is privately managed) share the same site. This provision is subject to a separate inspection and report.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Many improvements to provision and learning have been made. The school is not yet outstanding because there are a few remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that prevent more of it being outstanding and pupils' progress is not so strong in Year 1 or in mathematics.
- The Reception class provides a stimulating environment for learning and children make good progress. As they move into Year 1 their learning sometimes slows because assessments of pupils' progress are not used accurately to set expectations of what they should achieve. A programme for teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) is in place and has been instrumental in boosting reading and spelling skills. However, there are times when pupils are taught in a large group and work is not precisely tailored to their needs. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good overall but better in English than in mathematics. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall with elements of outstanding practice. Teachers set work at different levels of difficulty to match pupils' needs but, on a few occasions, the more able are not stretched fully, especially in mathematics at Key Stage 2. Pupils' targets for improvement are used effectively in some classes but not all.
- Behaviour and safety and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. These factors make a significant contribution to the calm, productive atmosphere in school and support the harmonious relationships.
- Leaders and managers have effectively addressed some issues that had led to a slowing of progress for some pupils. There is good leadership of teaching and management of performance. Senior staff know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and are successfully driving the school forward. However, systems for monitoring teaching and learning are not always rigorous enough

to ensure consistency in the quality and staff do not have sufficient opportunities to share their good practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of pupils in Year 1 by providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate in the setting of challenging, individual targets for pupils and so ensuring a smoother transition from the Reception Year.
- Improve achievement further and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that phonics work always takes place in small, focused groups where the work is accurately tailored to pupils' needs
 - ensuring that more-able pupils are consistently challenged in all lessons, especially in mathematics
 - providing all pupils with useful targets and information to help them improve their work
 - developing a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning and providing more opportunities for teachers to share their skills and good practice.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment is broadly average by the time pupils leave Year 6 and achievement is good. All the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children are making good progress and that the school meets their children's needs.

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are below those expected for their age and some are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A significant proportion of pupils have difficulties with early reading, writing and number work. Progress is good, especially in personal development and phonics. By the time they enter Year 1, pupils are working just below average expectations, which marks a good improvement on previous years.

Progress sometimes slows at the start of Key Stage 1 but picks up later and is often rapid in Year 2. An added emphasis on learning phonics in Key Stage 1 ensures that most pupils read confidently by the age of six. Those who do not meet this target have precisely focused teaching to help them overcome difficulties. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the majority of pupils are working at average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Following the 2011 tests, the school identified a number of issues with progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2. These have been addressed by including a greater emphasis on the precise use of mathematical language and developing computational skills. In one Year 4 lesson, the teacher insisted that pupils use the correct terms related to fractions and this supported the learning well. However, fewer pupils attain the higher levels in mathematics than in English. Pupils enjoy good quality class books, becoming confident, expressive readers. A good

proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in reading by the end of Year 6. In turn, these well-developed skills help pupils to write creatively and for different purposes. In one Year 6 lesson where teaching was outstanding, pupils explored the sophisticated techniques used by authors in order to influence and engage the reader. Some excellent drama and oral work was observed here.

Pupils who have special educational needs, those with a disability and those who are learning English as an additional language have skilled support and make the same progress as their classmates. The progress of boys and girls, and pupils of different backgrounds is tracked very closely, with intervention work ensuring that these groups learn equally well. A significant proportion of pupils join part way through a key stage; some are new to the country and a few have little prior experience of education or speaking English. Once settled, they achieve well, considering their starting points.

Quality of teaching

All parents and carers feel that their children are well taught, and that the school helps them support their children's learning. Pupils have similar views: they say they 'learn a lot', 'do a bit of everything' and that that adults provide good help.

In the Reception class, planning takes good account of children's interests. Excellent use is made of the outdoor learning area. One session included opportunities for climbing, constructing large-scale models, using a number line to count backwards and exciting role play. Both indoors and out, there are varied opportunities for children to choose activities, explore their world and develop independence. Expectations are high. One good session saw children developing interesting sentences verbally, before the teacher helped them to write.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers make the purpose of the lesson clear so pupils know exactly what is expected. Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed. They help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in lessons. Work is generally planned to take account of the various abilities in each class but, on some occasions, the more able do not have enough challenge in mathematics. Older pupils have useful targets so they know exactly how to improve their work, but this good system is not extended to all classes. Teachers' expectations of presentation vary. As a result, handwriting is good for most pupils, but poorly formed or positioned for some.

Phonics is taught from the Reception class upwards, but sometimes the teaching group is too large in number. This makes it difficult for the teacher to meet individual needs or to check learning. Across the school, teaching lays a strong emphasis on personal development and provides many opportunities for collaborative working. Creative and physical work is of a good standard and well supported through visiting specialists. For example, all pupils in one class have opportunities to learn a brass instrument and trained coaches provide an interesting range of sport and fitness activities to all age groups. The school is especially skilled in supporting pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Lunchtime language sessions, for example, are very successful in boosting learning for this group.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers have very positive views about behaviour and their children's safety. The school is a well-ordered environment in which pupils feel safe and valued. They are well equipped to deal with risk and trust adults to sort out problems quickly. Pupils firmly assert that bullying or racism is not tolerated and that behaviour is good. Those who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are very well supported through a range of strategies such as 'me time', and counselling. Parents and carers highly commend this aspect of the school's provision. Pupils of different backgrounds and ethnicity get on very well together and celebrate diversity through projects such as 'One World Week'. Good opportunities exist for pupils to experience responsibility. For example, school councillors, buddies and prefects contribute much to the day-to-day running of the school and to the process of decision making.

Attendance has improved significantly and is now average. Registers are monitored rigorously and any unexplained absence followed up swiftly. A good array of individual and class rewards encourages and celebrates regular attendance. Links with, and support for, families have helped to reduce the number of persistent absentees and extended holidays. The 'social time' provided at the start of each day is successful in encouraging good punctuality as well as providing a useful slot for communication between home and school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides clear direction for the school. Working closely with senior managers, she has developed a collegiate approach to school development, a shared vision and a firm commitment to improving provision further. Staff morale is good and strong teamwork secures the school's highly supportive and caring ethos. These factors explain why almost all parents and carers who returned questionnaires said they would recommend this school to another parent.

Senior leaders have a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is accurate and action plans focus on the right priorities. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment have improved significantly this year. This is due to a more effective system for tracking pupils' progress, the development of more challenging targets for learning and improvements to teaching. The school has strong capacity to improve further. However, some inconsistencies in teaching remain because the monitoring of lessons and of pupils' work is not sufficiently rigorous. Teachers benefit from well-planned professional development and robust performance management but do not have enough opportunities to share the best aspects of their teaching with each other. The governing body offers good support and challenge and brings a range of skills to management and day-to-day provision.

The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and caters effectively for a diverse range of needs and abilities. Staff and members of the governing body are focused on providing equality of opportunity, ensuring that opportunities are open to all, regardless of disability, special needs or financial circumstances. Acts of worship, involvement in charity fundraising and local events contribute much to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Established partnerships with other schools and agencies are highly effective in promoting academic and personal development. They ensure continuity of learning for those pupils transferring to secondary school and provide specialist services to meet specific needs. Links with the children's centre and pre-school prepare children well for the move into full-time education. Partnerships with parents and carers help them to actively support their children's learning at home. Initiatives, such as a mathematics project, keep them up to date with work in the classroom. Safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements; the site is secure and staff training is up to 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.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leigh Central Primary School, Leigh, WN7 1UY

Thank you for the very warm welcome and all the help you gave us when we inspected your school. Leigh Central Primary is a good school. Good teaching enables you to achieve well and the school helps you to develop into polite and caring young people. Behaviour and safety are good; you work well together, sharing equipment and ideas freely. Thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who talked with us. It is good to know that you feel safe and are happy in school. We especially liked this comment: 'I have two families; one at home and one at school'.

You are keen to learn and work hard. Your progress has improved very well recently. However, we think you could do even better so we have asked the adults in your school to:

- help you to make better progress in Year 1 when you move from the Reception class
- organise small phonics groups for all of you so that your teachers can check your learning better
- make sure that teachers include plenty of challenge in mathematics lessons for those of you who learn quickly
- provide you all with targets that include advice on how to improve your work.

In addition, we have asked school leaders to check on lessons to make sure that all these improvements are in place and making an impact.

You can help by continuing to work hard and keeping up the improved attendance. Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read
Lead Inspector

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