



High Legh Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111096
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278598
Inspection dates 6 February 2006 to 7 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Dee Brigstock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wrenshot Lane
School category	Community		High Legh
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6NW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01925 753713
Number on roll	132	Fax number	01925 756182
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs J Atkins
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Adam Croft

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

High Legh is a small school. Most of the pupils are from a white British heritage, with few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of educational needs is slightly higher than usual. When pupils start school their skills and knowledge are broadly average although the socio economic background of most pupils is above average. A higher than usual number of pupils leave or join the school between Reception and Year 6.

The school has several awards, including The Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and a Gold Healthy Eating Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

High Legh is a good school. The pupils are very happy, safe and secure and really enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour and their personal development are first class. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, helped by the award winning cook. Standards are above average by Year 6. This represents good progress between the time children enter school and when they leave. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress, aided by sometimes working in small groups.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and often outstanding. Relationships between all adults and pupils are distinguished by mutual respect. Pupils learn well because their work is pitched at a level that challenges them but also leads to success. Learning could be even better if teachers' marking was more consistent.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good, which the school's self-evaluation suggests. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning but some aspects of their work reflects the National rather than the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Overall, the school's curriculum is good because it is enriched exceptionally well. The quality of care, guidance and support of pupils is good.

The school is led and managed well and provides good value for money. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are firmly focused on raising standards, and in delivering an exciting, enriched curriculum. The school knows itself well. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school is well placed to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in the Foundation Stage by ensuring lessons are geared more to the age and interest level of the pupils.
- Spread the excellent practice in marking, evident in some classes, to all classes in school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, achievement and standards in the school are good. When the children start school their attainment is appropriate for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and, by the time they join Year 1, they reach the levels expected of them with their personal development a particular strength. In national tests in Years 2 and 6 standards are generally above average year on year. Pupils make good progress. The school's effective tracking system demonstrates this progress. Tracking of pupil performance is particularly important because of the numbers of pupils who transfer into the school during their primary education. In 2004, the school's results were in the top two percent in the country. This was not the case in Year 6 in 2005, when standards overall were average because an unusually large percentage of pupils had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Despite this, the proportion of pupils reaching above average standards remained high in both English and mathematics. Steps have already been taken to boost pupils' achievement in the current Year 6 and they are on target to achieve well. Writing skills are much stronger and identified weaknesses in science are being addressed effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped by additional, practical support from well-informed learning assistants and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their enthusiasm for school is stimulated by a rich curriculum. Pupils' excellent behaviour supports their learning well. Good relationships between pupils and their teachers underpin the development of their personal skills, as seen in the confidence they have in expressing their opinions. This prepares them well for the future. Arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. A rich range of experiences develops pupils' understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. This is shown particularly well in their learning through art, and in their excellent links with a school in South Africa. Attendance is good.

Pupils develop a strong sense of their own well-being. They know the best ways to stay healthy; for instance, through eating the right things and taking exercise. They feel safe at school and are aware of dangers out of school, such as being careful near roads. They are confident to express opinions stating categorically, 'There is no bullying whatsoever.' They really appreciate the additional games and activities provided at playtimes and lunchtimes. Many pupils have special responsibilities in their class and around the school. These, along with the school's good links with local businesses, such as the Garden Centre, and their extensive charitable work, give them a good understanding of contributing to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and often outstanding. Relationships between all staff and pupils are respectful and, as pupils' behaviour is managed so well, no time is wasted in maintaining discipline. The school has good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. These have a direct impact on pupils' learning because learning targets are linked to the skills pupils need to learn next. Teachers use these assessments and include them in interesting and challenging lessons, which catch pupils' interest and motivate them to learn more. Where lessons are outstanding, the varied, planned activities motivate pupils to learn very well indeed. For example, in Year 2, pupils were captivated by a humorous display of a container being filled on the interactive whiteboard. They were encouraged to suggest their own scales for measuring the amount of water, which the teacher linked very well to their multiplication tables, and then, in groups, experimented with measuring amounts of coloured water in different containers. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good because lessons, in this mixed age class, are too long for the Reception children. Also, not enough learning takes place in the outdoor area.

The quality of teachers' marking is good overall and refers to future targets for improvement. In some classes marking is outstanding. Here, teachers diagnose very specifically what pupils need to do next to improve further, using 'child-friendly' rather than more adult language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is rich, vibrant and exciting. It is planned and organised to ensure that all pupils build their skills and knowledge step by step and very effectively makes links between pupils' learning and the world of work. For example, pupils learn which shopkeepers use weights and measures and why. The art curriculum is outstanding and provision in sport and information and communication technology (ICT) has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils say they particularly enjoy the 'Golden Times' each week when they can pursue particular interests such as orienteering. Planning for the Reception group, does not however take into account the maturity of the children as fully as it should, and some lose concentration in lessons because they are expected to focus on one learning activity for too long. Also the outdoor classroom is not used purposefully enough.

The personal, social and health education programme is very effective throughout the school. Activities outside lessons are wide-ranging and much appreciated by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good levels of care, guidance and support for learning help pupils to learn and get the best from their education. A welcoming, well organised and vibrant environment supports learning effectively. The pupils say they know who to turn to for help, including staff and older pupils in the school. Parents are pleased with arrangements for settling children in the Reception class and if their children transfer from other schools. Good procedures are in place for transfer into secondary education. Staff implement effectively the good procedures for first aid and child protection, and are vigilant about health and safety checks.

Staff have a good view of individual pupil's academic needs and provide effective guidance to help them improve, both orally and through marking of work, although the quality of this marking is inconsistent. The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, and providing additional support when needed, are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads with a very clear vision for the school, which is shared and celebrated by all staff and governors. He has the overwhelming support of the school community. Parents recognise that their children make good progress and are fully supportive of the additional learning activities such as improved provision for sport and the arts that interest their children and enrich the curriculum. The headteacher makes excellent use of visiting artists and sports coaching to enhance pupils' skills, talents and well-being. He is using the support and guidance of external agencies effectively to improve pupils' progress even more. As a result, curriculum leaders work effectively as a team to make improvements through good systems of monitoring. The outcome of monitoring results in interventions to improve pupils' progress, such as providing 'catch up' programmes for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who are in danger of underachieving. They provide the school with accurate information to update future targets regularly.

The school's own evaluation of its performance is largely accurate although it is too generous in its evaluation of the Foundation curriculum and pupils' care guidance and support.

The work of the governors is good. They take an active role in school self-evaluation and are involved well in the successful initiatives, which have raised the profile of the school in the community. Current school improvement planning focuses well on raising pupils' progress, and in enhancing the Foundation Stage curriculum. Pupils' learning is particularly enhanced by the use of the extensive grounds and recent improvements to the new school buildings, which are both first rate. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school is well placed to improve even further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me feel so welcome in your school and for being helpful when I asked you questions. I really enjoyed talking with you.

There are lots of really good things going on in and about your school. The best ones are:

- your school is a very friendly and pleasant place to be and so you enjoy your learning
- your headteacher and teachers have introduced lots of very interesting learning activities both in lessons and in school clubs, especially in art and sport
- a lot of you present your work very well indeed
- your teachers use the interactive whiteboards very well in lessons
- everyone seems to get on well with one another.

I have asked your school to improve:

- the way the children in the reception class use their outdoor area
- the way some teachers mark your work.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make High Legh Primary School a good and exciting place to be.