



The Leverton Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115279
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279562
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Honey Lane
School category	Foundation		EN9 3BE
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01992 715922
Number on roll	223	Fax number	01992 651667
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Kate Woodhouse
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Isobel Barron

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving a residential area of Waltham Abbey. While most pupils are White British, around 20% come from a very wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. About half of these pupils are at a fairly early stage of learning English. The school has a broadly typical proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties. When children start school in the Nursery, their attainment is often below the levels expected for their age and particularly limited in language development. The school has been given the 'Investors in People' award in recognition of its staff development systems. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was on maternity leave and the deputy headteacher was in charge of the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school considers that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory and improving, and inspectors agree. The children get an excellent start in the Nursery then are taught well and achieve well in Reception, reaching the standards expected for their age by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching and pupils' achievements in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory, but not as effective in these age groups as in the Foundation Stage. Pupils generally reach the expected Level 2 by Year 2, but a lower than average proportion achieves Level 3, especially in writing, and this is an area for improvement. Teachers do not assess pupils' progress rigorously enough in Years 1 and 2. They need better information to enable them to plan lessons that match pupils' requirements more closely. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and they thoroughly enjoy school. The curriculum is sound and has recently been substantially revised to make it more interesting for pupils by making more links between subjects. The day-to-day care of pupils is good and staff make considerable efforts to work closely with all families to help them support their children's learning, for example through Family Learning workshops. Parents' views of the school are very positive. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher sets a good lead. She has worked hard since her appointment to ensure that the staff share her vision of how the school can best cater for its children and their families. Following quite an unsettled period of staff changes, her efforts are bearing fruit. The deputy head has 'held the fort' well while the head has been on leave. Recent changes to the arrangements for subject leadership have led to all teachers being more effectively involved in the plans for further development. The subject leaders now need to be able to check the impact of recent changes to the curriculum on teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. Governors give sound support and are led well by the chair. The school has improved adequately since its last inspection. With its current staff team and its plans for further development, it shows a good capacity to continue to improve. It gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the good and outstanding practice in teaching to all areas of the school, ensuring that assessments of pupils' progress are accurate and used to plan lessons that match pupils' needs closely. - Raise standards in writing by developing pupils' spelling, handwriting and ability to write at length, and ensuring that all reach the levels of which they are capable. - Ensure that the moves to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum are checked rigorously by subject leaders and have a positive impact on pupils' achievements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From a low starting point on admission to the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. They get a very good start in the Foundation Stage so that many

of them reach average standards before they start Key Stage 1. They improve their language and social skills particularly well. The improvements made in the school in recent years have had most effect in these early years. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been below average in recent years. The improvements to teaching and the curriculum are now starting to have an impact. The assessments made on pupils currently in Year 2 show an improving picture in reading and mathematics. For example, pupils reached broadly average standards in recent tests in mathematics, although their teachers' own assessments of their overall attainment are not as high. Writing standards remain below average and few pupils achieve the higher levels. This was an issue from the school's last inspection that has not been fully addressed. Pupils' writing standards do not equip them well enough for the next stage of their education. The challenging targets that the school sets for pupils were not met last year, but early indications are that performance will be nearer the mark this year. The school's assessments show no significant variation in the progress made by different groups of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall and they enjoy school. Standards in personal, social and emotional development are good in Nursery and Reception. Children in these age groups are inquisitive and begin to take some responsibility for their own learning. Throughout the school, relationships between pupils and adults in the school are relaxed and friendly. Pupils are polite and often behave well although, in Years 1 and 2, they do not always remain attentive when they are given work which is too hard or easy. Not all pupils take care with the presentation of their work or take enough responsibility for their own learning. Attendance is satisfactory for most pupils but, despite the school's good procedures for promoting attendance, a minority have high absence rates mainly because their families take holidays in term times. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy through the school's promotion of healthy eating and the importance of taking regular exercise. They feel safe and well cared for. Pupils are very proud of their school council (the Jedi Knights), which plays an important role in encouraging them to play happily together and to form friendships. Pupils develop awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves, for example, through raising funds for charities. Sound standards of literacy and numeracy, along with opportunities for teamwork and collaboration, ensure that pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education and for the future world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching as reflected in lessons and pupils' work ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. It is satisfactory overall. It is good and, at times excellent, in the Foundation Stage because planning is based very securely on detailed assessments of the needs of individual children. Lessons in this age group include a high level of practical activity, balancing sessions led by adults well with work the children choose for themselves. Activities in the outdoor area link effectively with indoor provision. Across the school as a whole, good relationships are established between adults and children. Support staff make a valuable contribution to lessons, often leading sessions well independently of the teachers. Teaching is satisfactory and improving in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' better progress in reading and mathematics demonstrates the success of recent initiatives. At times teaching does not engage pupils' interest or they have to sit and listen for too long. At such times, some become restless and lack concentration. Pupils' writing needs even higher expectations of handwriting and presentation. The quality of marking and feedback to pupils is inconsistent between classes. In Key Stage 1, it is better in Year 1 than in Year 2. This, coupled with a lack of rigour in some assessment arrangements, means that teachers and pupils do not always have enough information to establish what has been learned and what should be tackled next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The Reception curriculum is good and provides the right balance between purposeful play and teacher-led tasks, successfully building upon the Nursery's excellent curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, the school ensures that pupils have a satisfactory range of activities to develop their basic skills in reading, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Provision for teaching the writing curriculum has some weaknesses. Plans enable pupils to write for a range of purposes across the curriculum but the build up of skills is not steady. These include spelling, handwriting and writing at length. There are good links between some subjects, for example art and design and ICT. Plans make sure these subjects are taught in enough depth. The school has made satisfactory progress in improving ICT provision since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. It is enriched by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and visitors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The overall care of pupils is good. There are strong procedures for promoting the health and safety of pupils and their personal welfare. The warm family atmosphere

and approachability of staff make sure pupils feel confident there is an adult they can turn to should the need arise. Child protection arrangements are fully in place. The quality of guidance to help pupils to make progress in their academic work is not as strong as personal care. Individual target setting for pupils is effective in Year 1 where teachers' marking helps pupils to see how well they are achieving their targets, although this is not as developed in Year 2. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. It is good for those with behavioural and emotional difficulties where there is strong liaison with other specialist agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall when measured by their current impact on pupils' achievement and the extent to which the school has improved since its last inspection. The headteacher's vision is good and communicated well, for example, through the school improvement plan and leadership plan. She is establishing an effective leadership team and their recent progress on initiatives to improve teaching and the curriculum has shown a secure capacity to improve further. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate and there is no complacency about the standards it reaches. More now needs to be done to monitor the success of changes and to use analyses of performance data when setting targets for development. The governors have valuable experience and skills to offer. They are supportive but rightly ask challenging questions of the school as necessary. Recruitment of governors is often difficult. Several current vacancies mean that the rest of the governors have to take on extra work. The school's resources are deployed effectively in line with detailed financial planning. Parents' and pupils' views of the school are mostly very positive. The school works hard to involve them in its development. Staff and governors provide the local community with a welcoming and improving school.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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 welcoming us to your school and helping us to find out about it. This letter is to tell you about what we saw. I hope that your teachers and parents will read it with you if you need some help. These are the best things we saw in your school: - You enjoy school and like playing with your friends. - You are doing well in your reading and getting better in numeracy. - Your school council (Jedi Knights) makes sure your teachers involve you in what happens in school. - The adults care for you well and make sure you feel safe in school. - Your parents are pleased with how your school works. - The children in Nursery and Reception get a really good start to school. - Mrs Barron and Mrs Beggs are making sure your school gets even better. We have talked to Mrs Barron and Mrs Beggs about some things that could be even better: - We think you could get better at writing. We hope you will try your best when your teachers help you with this. - We want your teachers to make sure they know even more about how you are getting on with your work. Then they will know how to help you to improve. - Your teachers have made some changes to your lessons recently. We want them to check even more carefully that these are helping you to learn well and that all your lessons are as good as they can be. Keep up the good work.