



Leverstock Green Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117416
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280070
Inspection dates 9 March 2006 to 10 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Michael Best LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Green Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		HP2 4SA
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01442 406520
Number on roll	280	Fax number	01442 406522
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Beryl Milnes
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Alan Phair

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than many other primary schools. Pupil mobility is low. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those speaking English as an additional language are average. The attainment of children entering the Foundation Stage is broadly average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is below the national average. There has been a high turnover of staff in the past two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that its effectiveness is satisfactory. The school provides good quality care, support and guidance to its pupils. This has been especially important in recent weeks, following a major industrial incident near the school. Pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to work, and take an active part in planning and developing the school. The school has good links with parents and its other partners. The quality of teaching and the progress children make in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Overall standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. However, standards in reading at Year 2 and writing at Year 6, particularly for the more able, were not good enough in the national tests in 2005. The school is effectively addressing the dip in last year's results in English. Achievement is satisfactory. Successful teaching is challenging, and learning moves at a good pace, but this is not consistent throughout the school. The school's procedures for analysing and monitoring teaching, learning and standards have not been rigorous enough, in identifying and sharing good practice between classes. The school provides pupils with a good range of learning activities and recent improvements to the English curriculum are helping to raise standards. The headteacher has successfully steered the school through a period of considerable change. He has a purposeful vision for the future. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years and many staff have only recently assumed subject leadership responsibilities. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection, and its capacity for further improvement is good. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and shortcomings. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to raise standards, particularly for more able pupils, in reading by the end of Year 2, and writing by the end of Year 6 - improve the quality of teaching and learning by sharing and developing good practice in the school - put in place more rigorous procedures for analysing and monitoring teaching, learning and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. The proportion of children reaching the early learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage is broadly average, with strengths in their personal, social and emotional development. Standards at the end of Year 2 in the 2005 National Curriculum assessments were broadly average. Results were higher in writing than reading where fewer abler pupils achieved the higher levels. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2005 were similar to the national averages in mathematics and science. In English, pupils' attainment was below average. Results were much lower than expected in writing, especially at the higher levels, because of weaknesses in pupils' non-fiction writing. Inspection findings indicate that the school has acted quickly to resolve these shortcomings at both key stages, and that standards are

improving. Over time, results in the annual statutory tests and assessments have remained broadly constant and pupils have met their suitably challenging targets. The differences in performance between boys and girls are not significant compared with other schools. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, including those learning English as an additional language. In some classes, teachers do not consistently challenge the more able pupils because the pace of lessons is too slow and their expectations are not high enough. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and well looked after, and are keen to make progress. Pupils are polite, friendly and self-confident. Most behave well during lessons and around the school. Pupils say that the school acts quickly to resolve any incidents of bullying. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respond sensitively to talks and readings in assemblies. Pupils look after each other well, and quickly offer help if someone is feeling lonely or upset. They have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures, strengthened by their visits to local places of worship. Pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves healthy and safe. They enjoy a good range of sporting activities and readily accept responsibility. Pupils play an active role in the school and wider community. The school council recently conducted a survey on pupils' lunch boxes, and has been behind the introduction of the 'friendship tree' in the playground. Pupils organise fund raising events for local and national charities, and perform in concerts for the local community. Pupils' impressive personal qualities and sound basic skills equip them effectively for the future and life within the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school's successful efforts to improve pupils' learning are seen at their best in the Nursery and in Key Stage 2. In the most effective lessons, learners are fully aware of what they are expected to achieve. The youngest learners benefit from an interesting range of activities that focus well on their particular needs. In Years 5 and 6, the high quality of teachers' questioning encourages pupils to think hard before giving detailed answers. In most lessons, pupils work well with their learning partners, supporting and challenging each other effectively. Support staff effectively help individuals and small groups of pupils with learning difficulties. However, there are occasions, particularly in the opening part of lessons, when teachers do not make best use of adult help. The school has effective procedures for assessing and recording learners' attainment and progress but some teachers find difficulty in using this information to set clear targets in lessons.

As a result, more able pupils are not always set hard enough work, and are given too much time which slows their pace of their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy a good range of learning activities. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, and effectively planned. It meets statutory requirements in both key stages. The Foundation Stage curriculum reflects the six areas of learning and achieves a balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities. The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education, and citizenship is good. Pupils enjoy learning about how to care for their environment and themselves and to develop their role in the community. The school has resolved shortcomings in information and communication technology identified in the previous inspection report. The curriculum in English has been significantly strengthened this school year following the dip in results in 2005. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons, including musical and sporting activities, mainly during lunchtimes. Visits to residential centres, museums and other local places of interest, together with a good range of visitors to the school, enrich the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care and guidance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. Rigorous procedures for child protection, first aid and health and safety help to ensure that pupils feel positive about coming to school and that they arrive in a good frame of mind for learning. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day. Parents speak highly of the school's response to a recent industrial incident near the school. They are very pleased that the school's close links with external agencies have ensured the prompt provision of specialist support and counselling. Teachers monitor pupils' personal and academic development closely. Procedures to promote pupils' attendance, attitudes and behaviour are good. Those who are at risk of underachieving receive additional help and support. A new system for analysing pupils' test results is providing a more accurate picture of their relative strength and weakness. Pupils have achievable targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. Older pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has successfully led and managed the school through a period of considerable change and improvement. The school has effectively addressed the many issues identified in the previous inspection report and is well placed to make further improvements. The headteacher is committed to the school and successfully promotes its aims and values. Well

supported by the deputy headteacher, he has a purposeful vision for the school's future development. Last year's unexpected drop in results in English has served to re-focus the school's commitment to improving standards. The leadership team rightly identified that their existing procedures for monitoring teaching and learning, and tracking learners' progress as they move through the school, were not rigorous enough. Good practice in teaching and learning is not sufficiently shared between classes, and subject leaders' analyses of standards have not drawn on enough first-hand evidence from classroom observations. With good support from its partners, the school is working effectively to resolve these shortcomings. The school's self-evaluation provides an accurate picture of its work, and takes account of the views of its stakeholders. Priorities for improvement are achievable, and the school's improvement plan successfully identifies timescales and costings. However, some of the targets are too broad. There has been a high turnover of staff in the past two years. Many subject leaders are still developing their management roles. The school's support for pupils with learning difficulties is effectively managed. Day-to-day routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. The accommodation is spacious and learning resources are good. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are successfully developing their role as the school's 'critical friend'. The budget is effectively deployed, with reserves within recommended levels.

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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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	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?	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?	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	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 very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school last week. We really enjoyed hearing from you about your work and all that you do in school. We were impressed by your confidence, good behaviour and willingness to work hard. We like the way in which you all have a say in helping the school improve through the school council, especially the development of the 'friendship tree' in the playground. In lessons, we saw you working well with your learning partners. Many of you can explain what you need to do to improve your work. Your teachers share the learning outcomes for each lesson with you. In the best lessons, these really make you think hard and your teachers ask some particularly difficult questions - which you do very well to answer. In other lessons, we think the work your teachers give you could be harder because some of you find it a bit too easy and finish quickly. Although many of the staff are new to the school, they know you well. They take good care of you and give you a lot of help and support when you need it. Last year, some pupils did not do as well as expected in their reading and writing tests. Your teachers have found out why this happened. They have bought some really interesting books for you to read and are helping you to improve the quality of your writing. There are many good things going on in lessons in your school. We want all your teachers to get to know more about these and find out just what is helping you to do well. This will help them improve their teaching and your learning. Mr Phair, the teachers and the governors know what they need to do to improve your school. They have made many good changes since the last time the school was inspected. With your help, they can make the school even better. Keep working hard and enjoying yourselves at school.