



# Leigh CofE Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106445  
**Local Authority** Wigan  
**Inspection number** 287516  
**Inspection dates** 23–24 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Gordon Alston

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Henrietta Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Leigh
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11		Lancashire WN7 1LP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 671389
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	350	<b>Fax number</b>	01942 269797
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Eric Cadman
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Holian
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is an above average size school serving an area of disadvantage, although the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is similar to that found in most schools. There is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a small proportion is from a range of minority ethnic groups. The school population includes small groups learning English as an additional language and pupils in care. The headteacher has been in post since September 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Leigh Church of England School is a good school, a clear message echoed by inspectors, parents and the school. Parents summed this up in the comment, 'the positive transformation in the children brought about by staff at the school over time is incredible and testament to their dedication and genuine love for children.' This view is confirmed by good teaching, the increasingly good progress the pupils are making in their learning, their good achievement, great enjoyment of school, positive attitudes and good behaviour.

Teachers expect and ensure that pupils work hard, learn at a brisk rate and make good progress. This leads to above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Very good relationships promote learners' willingness to try hard. Teachers' classroom management is very good and pupils display good behaviour and attitudes to work. They are encouraged to work independently and also cooperatively. Well marked work in writing helps pupils know what to do next to improve. However, in mathematics, the pace and level of challenge in lessons is not always well matched to the needs of learners, and methods of working out solutions to mathematical problems are not sufficiently emphasised. This particularly affects less able and less confident learners.

Great emphasis is placed on providing meaningful learning experiences that not only interest pupils but also prepare them well for the 21 century. As a result, pupils feel confident and willingly try innovative approaches to learning, for example, in 'big writing' time and learning French. They thoroughly enjoy their time in school and all benefit equally from what the school offers. They remain calm, work very enthusiastically and recognise the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

The new headteacher is building well on existing good practice and is successfully beginning to strike the right balance between striving for academic achievement and fostering the pupils' personal development. The school has a purposeful ethos and there is a strong commitment to further improvement. Recent self-evaluation has given the school a secure knowledge of its strengths and highlighted clear plans to tackle identified weaknesses. The headteacher is successfully developing a more collaborative approach to school improvement. The staff team is enthusiastic but the effectiveness of subject leaders is inconsistent. For example, the leadership of literacy is strong and been instrumental in raising standards in writing. This quality, however, has not yet been developed in other subjects.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all mathematics lessons provide pupils, particularly the less able and less confident, with the challenge and explanations they need in order to achieve as well as they should.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in all subjects to the good level seen in the leadership of literacy in order to raise standards further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Over recent years, the attainment of pupils entering the school is rising and in the current Year 3 standards are above average. There is a similar picture as pupils leave the school and achievement is improving. In 2005, test results were above average and the school's unconfirmed results show that results rose again in 2006, meeting challenging targets, but results were weaker in mathematics. Pupils' mental and problem solving skills are not sharp enough, particularly for lower ability pupils. The school is acutely aware of this and is beginning to consider strategies for improvement. In writing, pupils make particularly good progress, which reflects the success of the school's focused efforts over the last two years. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from teaching assistants who help them to succeed with their work, thus ensuring good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils learn to respect and understand their own feelings and those of others. Relationships in the school are good and pupils are extremely polite, friendly and courteous. Their good behaviour and attitudes to work create a happy, productive and enjoyable learning environment. Attendance is broadly average. School council meetings involve pupils in making decisions, such as planning the 'Remembrance Garden'. All pupils show great initiative in lessons because teachers provide many opportunities for them to develop confidence and to take responsibility for their own learning. They successfully adopt safe and healthy lifestyles and know about the benefits of regular physical activity and healthy eating. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; they understand the importance of rules and good order and support each other well. Their good social and basic skills prepare them well for the next stages of learning and life in their community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and learning. Important strengths, found consistently in lessons, are the way pupils are engaged and the way learning is made fun by the effective use of a good range of practical activities, games and interactive whiteboards. Question and answer sessions, and discussion, involve pupils in lessons and effectively promote independent thinking skills. All teachers display good classroom management and lessons run with little disruption.

There are areas for improvement, especially in mathematics. In these lessons, the pace and level of challenge is not always well matched to the needs of learners. The teaching does not always give enough emphasis to providing pupils with a clear mathematical method that helps them to succeed. Likewise, there is not a strong enough focus on getting pupils to explain the methods they use in answering mathematical questions. This is particularly important for less able and less confident learners.

Whilst the use of assessment information is consistently good in English, its use is satisfactory in other subjects. There is much good marking, for instance in writing, but this is not yet a consistently good feature.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Clear links across subjects successfully promote enjoyment in learning and good achievement. The health, safety and emotional development of learners is well supported, particularly through sport, exercise, drama and technology. A good range of out-of-school activities, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum. National guidelines are successfully adapted to meet the needs of all children equally, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good use is made of learners' literacy and information and communication technology skills across other subjects but opportunities to develop their mathematical skills are limited. Not enough emphasis is given to how pupils can apply these skills in everyday life. Pupils accept responsibilities maturely, helping them to become young citizens who are involved in how their community is run. As pupils have limited first-hand experience of other cultures, the school provides this through lessons, enriched by visitors and visits.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff provide a very supportive and encouraging atmosphere in which pupils feel very safe, secure and confident. Every pupil is known well to staff and treated as an individual and with dignity. The views of parents and pupils are sought and valued and the result is a school that meets the needs of its community well. Pupils experiencing social or emotional difficulties are well supported by excellent links with outside agencies and the school's own pastoral system. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the few who do not have English as their first language, say they feel well supported in lessons by adults who reward successes and boost self-esteem. Arrangements to meet government requirements are in place to safeguard pupils and for health and safety.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has made a good start in involving pupils more in their learning, through individual targets in writing. This good practice is not well developed in other subjects.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher share a strong belief that pupils should enjoy learning, and do well both academically and in their personal development. This is the driving force in a school where pupils achieve well on all fronts and is the basis of the school's good capacity to improve.

In the very short time since his appointment, the headteacher has built on the existing management procedures and practices successfully; this has led to further improvements, for example, revising the behaviour policy. The new leadership group successfully identifies priorities and the strategies to meet them, such as the need to improve provision and standards in mathematics. The successful strategies introduced to raise standards in writing are being implemented in the teaching of mathematics. The management of subjects is variable. The leadership of literacy is particularly strong, whereas the leadership of mathematics has not yet impacted as positively on raising standards. The good use of all resources and pupils' good achievement secure good value for money. The governing body is knowledgeable and has an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where further developments can be made, and as a result are increasingly able to challenge as well as support the headteacher.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing this letter after thinking about the two enjoyable days we spent in your school. We came to see how good your school is and you had just as important a role in this as your teachers had. Your friendliness, good behaviour and the way you get on with one another are a credit to you all. These qualities help you to grow and learn.

When we asked pupils their views of the school, one girl replied, 'School is mint, lessons are fun and everyone is happy.' She was right. Your school is a good, caring school. You have a good team of adults led by a hard working headteacher and everyone wants you to do as well as you can. Your teachers make learning interesting and make sure you work hard so that you make good progress in lessons. They also arrange lots of visits for you to go on and visitors to talk to you. We were pleased to see how hard you work but equally important is how well everyone gets on. We saw lots of pupils who have responsibilities and jobs to do and who do them well.

So that your school gets even better, we have asked your teachers to help you to improve your mental and problem solving skills in mathematics. You can help yourselves and others to get even better at mathematics by explaining to other pupils how you work out your answers to questions. We were very pleased in the way the new ideas in literacy have been introduced to support you in improving your writing. We would like to see a similar approach to this in order to help you improve in other subjects.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and, if you and your teachers work as hard as when we were in school, I am sure you and your school will continue to do well.