

Little London Community Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107888
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	287941
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	179
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Marian Charlton
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Wood
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2003
School address	Meanwood Street Leeds West Yorkshire LS7 1SR
Telephone number	0113 244 2457
Fax number	0113 244 2457

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school located close to Leeds city centre. The housing surrounding the school is mainly local authority owned tower blocks and maisonettes and is recognised as an area in which there is considerable social need. The cultural diversity of the community is reflected in over 70% of pupils coming from minority ethnic backgrounds, a very high proportion of whom are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is three times the national average. The headteacher was appointed in April 2005 following a period of unsettled management 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

Little London is a satisfactory and improving school. It is a school that, in the last two years, has turned some weaknesses into strengths. These are seen in pupils' good standards of personal development and in the good quality of care, guidance and support provided for them. Pupils see themselves as 'Little London learners' who come to school, as they say, to 'train their brains'. Attendance has risen over the past two years and is now above the national average. Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils enjoy school and try hard to succeed. They feel safe in school, and valued as individuals because they know they will be given the help they need. They understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle; for example, the school council has arranged for the opening of a healthy tuck shop that they will run themselves. Pupils who learn English as an additional language are particularly well supported. Their needs are assessed and their progress carefully planned and monitored so that they are quickly able to learn alongside others. They are fully included in every aspect of school life that is reflected in the harmony of friendships seen throughout the school. The school has the overwhelming support of parents and is a thriving centre for learning within the community.

Although standards of attainment are improving they are still well below the national average. Most pupils generally make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily but progress is inconsistent and some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start because teaching has improved and is now good. They progress well from their below average starting points. This is beginning to have a good impact on standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2. Throughout the school, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language make satisfactory and at times good progress because they receive additional support. However, a minority of pupils with average and above average skills do not make as much progress as they could. This is partly due to a legacy of unsettled times in the school but is also consistent with the current teaching picture which is variable, though at least satisfactory. A strength of the satisfactory curriculum is the range and quality of activities to enrich learning by providing first-hand experiences. The main focus of the curriculum has been to establish a sound basis for improved standards in literacy, numeracy and science. This has narrowed pupils' opportunities to develop their basic skills, especially in writing, across all areas of the curriculum. The school recognises that a more creative approach to planning would benefit pupils' learning and enable teachers to capitalise on pupils' good attitudes and enthusiasm, which have been so successfully nurtured.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has had an immense impact. She has restored staff morale, raised pupils' and parents' aspirations and rekindled everyone's eagerness to succeed in a well ordered, fully supportive environment. In partnership with the local authority and through her own persistent determination the headteacher has overcome significant barriers to learning, including a large financial deficit, and ensured that the school provides satisfactory value for money. The senior leadership team has been strengthened. It carries out its clearly defined roles effectively so can claim a shared responsibility for the accurate evaluation of the school's performance. Curriculum coordinators' roles are developing but these leaders are not yet sufficiently engaged in monitoring progress and developments in their subjects. Governors know the school's strengths and where it needs to improve; they provide appropriate challenge and support. The school has already proven its capacity to improve attendance, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, teaching and links with parents

and the wider community. Given what has been achieved in such a relatively short time there is good capacity leadership to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Raise standards and improve progress in English and mathematics
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good
- Provide opportunities for pupils to practise and develop skills across the whole range of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards attained in the national tests in 2006 were well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. More rigid systems for assessment and target setting introduced by the senior management team, along with improved teaching, have seen standards begin to rise but there is still some way to go. Reception children make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 most have reached the early learning goals expected for their age. Despite this rate of progress being relatively recent it is beginning to have a positive impact on standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils whose first language is not English often make up the most ground due to the level of support they receive. Progress for some older pupils who have been in the school longer has faltered because of the legacy of unsettled teaching. Although these pupils are progressing steadily, the pace of learning, especially for the more able and some of average ability, is not always challenging enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Relationships within the school are good. Pupils care about one another and have a high regard for their own and others' achievements. All pupils strive tirelessly to win tickets for the popular 'chancers' draw, which does much to raise self-esteem. Their respect for each other's cultural backgrounds goes beyond the school, as seen in the exchange of information with a school in Jordan. Pupils enjoy what the school offers, from the healthy lunches, served by the older pupils in 'family' groupings to the many well attended after-school clubs. They take on extra responsibilities willingly and show good initiative in the ideas put forward for discussion by the school council. Pupils' aspirations have risen because learning has become more fun. They gain valuable life skills, by learning to work with and help others, which prepares them for life as members of a community. However, there is ground still to be gained in their acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills to prepare for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and accounts for pupils' overall satisfactory progress. Some teaching is good and there are outstanding lessons to be seen but the overall quality is inconsistent so progress is uneven. Good relationships in classes are firmly established. This helps pupils feel more confident so they are willing to 'have a go'. Teachers use assessments well to plan the next steps of pupils' learning, building on what pupils already know. They share objectives with pupils so they know what is expected of them, and question pupils well to assess their understanding and progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. They know pupils well and are sensitive to their particular needs. The pace of some lessons is slow and this tends to make learning dull for pupils so their interest wavers. In some lessons it is not clear what pupils have learned because there is no check to see whether what pupils do matches the original objective. There is scope for the best practice seen in lessons to be shared more rigorously throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils' learning needs are met satisfactorily through an appropriately broad curriculum. Opportunities are enhanced by the inclusion of Spanish and the wealth of enrichment activities to broaden pupils' horizons and promote learning. A good example is pupils' work with Opera North, which promotes literacy as well as musical performance. The focus on improving basic mathematics and, more particularly, writing skills has driven recent planning. This has led to a less adventurous approach by the school so that there is little opportunity for pupils to regularly link up their learning by practising different skills across a range of subjects. A programme to deal with social and emotional learning is having a good impact on pupils' ability to make informed choices about their personal well-being. The range of sports and non-sporting activities provided for pupils outside of lesson time is good and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. There are well planned learning activities for children in the Foundation Stage, but provision for outdoor learning is awaiting completion so currently opportunities are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents agree overwhelmingly that their children are well cared for while in school. Pupils know they are in safe hands. Support provided for the most vulnerable pupils is especially strong. Learning mentors work closely with individual pupils and nurture groups very effectively to help them overcome personal difficulties and access their learning. Good guidance is given with regard to relationships; consequently, school days are free from bullying and racism. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. The school has developed satisfactory systems for tracking progress and setting realistic targets, but recognises that further refinement is now needed in order to make data more immediately accessible to all teachers. Most pupils receive clear guidance from teachers' marking about how to improve their work, but not all of the elements of effective assessment are embedded in practice.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has established a climate of accountability, which has already brought about significant improvement. An important factor has been her receptiveness to the Intensifying Support Programme from the local authority, which has enabled staff to harness teaching and management skills and set the school on the right track. The headteacher is supported by a committed, well qualified team of teachers and teaching assistants. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are effective and judgements show that the school knows itself well. Performance management systems for teaching and non-teaching staff are in place, and their outcomes are linked to pupils' progress. Governors have a clear overview of the school's work. While recognising that there is still work to be done the school is well placed to build on what has already been achieved.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Inspection of Little London Community Primary School and Nursery, Leeds, LS7 1SR.

Thank you for welcoming us into your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out how proud you are of your school. We were impressed by your politeness and good behaviour, and what a happy lot of children you are! We very quickly lost count of all the smiles we got. The things that pleased us most were your good attendance and behaviour and how much you care for each other. Your school council told us that there is no bullying, and they were right. We were also impressed by the way the grown-ups in school look after you. Your headteacher is very proud of you all and has some super ideas about how to make the school even better. (Fancy renting out car parking space to raise money for school trips - brilliant!!!)

We think you all need to work a bit harder to reach higher standards in English and maths so that your 'satisfactory' progress will become 'good', and we have asked your teachers to make all of your lessons as exciting as the best ones.

Good luck everyone and keep on smiling!