



# Leedon Lower School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 109509  
**Local Authority** BEDFORDSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 288404  
**Inspection dates** 21–22 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Margaret Goodchild

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Highfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Leighton Buzzard
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9		Bedfordshire LU7 3LZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01525 374713
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	278	<b>Fax number</b>	01525 381884
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Deborah Billinghamurst
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Frances Godfrey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 September 2002		

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<b>Age group</b> 4–9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21–22 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 288404
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average lower school on the outskirts of Leighton Buzzard. The school's intake is mixed although the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is a bit below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the school has very few pupils for whom English is an additional language. It also has fewer pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than in many schools. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly similar to national expectations, although some children have limited language and social skills when they join the Reception class. The school has Investor in People status, has gained Artsmark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark for its work with low attaining pupils, and it is working towards full recognition as a Healthy School.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents express a high level of appreciation for its work, for instance, saying that they believe, 'all staff do their best for the children' and that the new head teacher, 'has been like a breath of fresh air'. The school provides good value for money.

Pupils are well cared for and benefit from the good level of support provided. As a result, they have good attitudes to learning, behave well and say that they enjoy school. They make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave. Throughout the school, they make good progress in reading, where standards are above average, and do particularly well in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Although too few pupils reach the higher levels in writing by the end of Year 2, they catch up in Years 3 and 4 to reach above average standards by the time they leave. Teaching is good overall and pupils are interested and enthusiastic learners. The curriculum meets their needs well. Links that are being forged between subjects make learning enjoyable for pupils. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and especially so in the development of their early reading skills. Throughout the school, a good range of additional activities enriches pupils' learning. The school has begun to track pupils' progress and makes good use of assessment information to group pupils according to their learning needs. The marking of pupils' written work is not always informative enough, however, and assessment information is not shared with pupils as much as it should be.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher, who was appointed at the beginning of this academic year, has a clear vision for taking the school forward. She provides strong and enthusiastic leadership, has already had a significant impact on the school, and has been effective in empowering other managers. She is supported well by the governing body and governors have a thorough knowledge of the school's work. She receives good support from some other staff with management responsibilities. Coordination of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is strong, and reading is led and managed well. The coordination of writing is less well developed and that of the remaining subject areas is satisfactory. Clear plans are already underway to rectify this situation and the deputy headteacher, who was recently promoted, is working closely with the headteacher to increase her leadership and management skills. The headteacher has begun to improve the way data is used, as it is not yet central to the way many managers judge the school's effectiveness. Senior managers are, nevertheless, accurate in identifying the right priorities for development. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection overall, and has improved well recently. It is now well placed to improve further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing to bring attainment at the end of Year 2 in line with that in reading and mathematics, particularly by improving marking and making pupils aware of how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the deputy headteacher and all subject coordinators are fully involved in monitoring the work of the school and make greater use of data in evaluating the school's effectiveness.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are above average by the end of Year 4 and pupils achieve well. The achievement of children in the Foundation Stage is good and they are making outstanding progress in reading. Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 2 were average in 2006, having been above average in 2005. In both years, results were above average in mathematics. They did less well in writing, where too few pupils reached the higher levels. Currently, standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, where pupils are making exceptionally good progress, and in mathematics. Standards are broadly average in writing, where progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4 and reach standards that are above average in reading and writing and slightly above average in mathematics. There is no difference in the overall achievement of different groups of pupils. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils make good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and form constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They behave well, although their friendly chattiness is not always channelled sufficiently in lessons and in the Foundation Stage they are sometimes encouraged to be too noisy. Otherwise, pupils apply themselves well and work hard. Parents are very positive about the standard of behaviour and about how much their children enjoy school. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. They contribute well to the school and wider community. This is typified by their recycling efforts and by the Year 4 activity leaders who fulfil their role exceptionally well, for instance, by encouraging all age groups to take part in a range of purposeful playground games. The good progress that pupils make in acquiring basic skills and their good social development provide a secure foundation for the next stage of their education and, ultimately, for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good, with the result that pupils achieve well. Teachers set clear objectives for lessons and plan work with pupils' enjoyment as well as achievement in mind. Pupils, therefore, find lessons interesting and usually maintain good concentration. Teachers provide good support for lower attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and strategies to help them are used well. Teaching assistants are skilled and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. However, work is not always challenging enough for higher attaining pupils, particularly in writing lower down the school, and teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations for quiet working.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils well. There is a good emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT, and the school is linking subjects together meaningfully to make learning more motivating to pupils. The programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education is strong and pupils have good opportunities to develop thinking skills and understand the need to exercise their brains. The curriculum is enriched well by a weekly cross-curricular afternoon. During this time, pupils work in mixed-age groupings on a range of activities, from Italian to pebble painting, and by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and visits. The school also has good facilities for outdoor learning and keeps hens and cockerels on site. The provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is good in mathematics and sport, but satisfactory overall.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The day-to-day pastoral care of pupils is strong and appreciated by pupils and parents alike. Pupils have confidence that adults will sort out any problems that arise in school, and midday supervisors provide very good quality support and guidance. The school readily calls on specialist services and outside agencies to support pupils and their families. It has appropriate systems in place to protect pupils, and the use of a service based at a local upper school provides very good support to those who regularly need to discuss their personal problems with an adult. Pupils receive good personal guidance, whereas academic guidance provided is satisfactory. They are generally clear about what is expected of them in reading and mathematics, but lack of information about how to improve is a key factor in pupils achieving less well in writing at Key Stage 1 than they do in other areas.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school is led well by the headteacher and governing body. The headteacher has quickly motivated the staff and drawn them together as a dedicated team. The creation of links between subjects, training in promoting pupils' thinking skills and collaborative work with a consultant in developing the environment have all served to breathe new life into the school. The headteacher has a clear vision for taking the school forward and has an accurate knowledge of its effectiveness.

The headteacher is particularly good at recognising potential in her staff and empowering them to build on their skills. She has identified exactly what needs to be done to involve all subject managers fully in monitoring and is building on existing good practice. The mathematics coordinator provides valuable support and advice to other staff, for instance, by showing them how to make the teaching of mathematics exciting and by providing extension for gifted and talented pupils in the subject. The ICT coordinator leads and manages his subject effectively, advising other teachers, improving the way work is planned and running workshops for parents to increase their computer skills. Good coordination of reading has led to a clear improvement in standards and pupils are making rapid progress in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. The monitoring of teaching and learning by all managers is not yet as rigorous as it should be, however, particularly in order to raise standards reached in writing by the end of Year 2 and to bring all teaching up to the level of the best in the school.

Governance is good. The governing body has clear systems for collecting information about the school's work, asks critical questions and works well with staff in identifying ways of improving the school.

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## 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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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**

23 February 2007

Dear Children

Leedon Lower School, Highfield Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 3LZ

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited your school and for being so ready to talk to us. We enjoyed our time there and I am writing now to tell you what we found out about it.

This is a good school and we could see why so many of your parents wrote to say that they are pleased with it. We were pleased to see how enthusiastic you are about learning and you told us that you enjoy school. You behave well and usually concentrate in lessons. Teachers try to make work interesting for you and you are making good progress. By the time you get to the end of Year 4, you reach higher standards than pupils in many schools. Those of you in the younger classes are making really good progress with your reading and you do well in mathematics, especially in Years 1 and 2. Not all of you do quite so well in writing by the time you take tests at the end of Year 2 and so we have asked the school to make sure that work is always difficult enough and that you are clear about what you need to do to improve. The teachers and other adults care for you well, and the teaching assistants and midday supervisors are quick to provide extra help for those of you who need it.

Your new headteacher is doing a good job and wants to make the school even better for you. We have asked her to find some new ways of working with the teachers to make the school as good as possible. You can help them by working quietly when you go off to your tables to do your writing, unless you are asked to talk to someone else about what you are doing.

Yours sincerely

M J Goodchild Lead Inspector