



St Leonards, Heath and Reach, VA Lower School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109618
Local Authority BEDFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 288450
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	First	School address	Thrift Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Heath And Reach, Heath And Reach
Age range of pupils	4–9		Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 0AX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01525 237253
Number on roll (school)	82	Fax number	01525 237055
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Alan Gomersall
		Headteacher	Mrs Jan Abrams
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group 4–9	Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006	Inspection number 288450
-------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small first school situated close to Stockgrove Country Park. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals and most pupils are from White British backgrounds. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. When children start in the Reception class their abilities are generally below those expected for their age.

The school is part of a Local Learning Community of schools in Leighton Buzzard, Linslade and the surrounding villages. The school is also part of the Local Schools Sport Community based at a specialist sports college. The school has many awards for its work, including three Investors in People accreditations, National Healthy Schools status, three Basic Skills Quality Marks and a FA Charter Mark.

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 with some outstanding features. Good teaching ensures that all pupils, and in particular those with learning difficulties, achieve well. Reception children get an excellent start due to the high calibre of teaching and most attain the expected standards on entry to Year 1. Lively teaching in the infant classes, where learning is made fun using computers, results in pupils achieving well and reaching above average standards by the end of Year 2. Good teaching and progress continue in the junior class, where careful planning ensures that pupils of different ages and abilities receive challenging and interesting work. As a result, Year 4 pupils attain well above average standards by the time they leave the school. Year 4 pupils do not do quite as well in mathematics tests as they do in English but standards are still above average. Staff keep meticulous records of how well pupils are doing, making it easy to track individual pupils' progress through the school.

Parents correctly believe that their children are getting a good education. One writes, 'This is a wonderful village school. Children and parents are encouraged and included in all activities and plans.' The school lies at the heart of the local community. Parents and grandparents regularly enjoy school lunches, pupils enter the annual village show and dance at the village fete, and the school choir sings in the church hall. There is a happy, purposeful and calm ethos based strongly on Christian values such as love, respect and compassion, which promotes pupils' personal development, which is outstanding. They flourish and grow into confident and active learners who enjoy the nourishing school meals and the excellent variety of sports available. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for because staff know them and their families very well and make sure that their personal and learning needs are met. Pupils know this, feel safe and thrive, saying that their views are always listened to and acted upon if possible. Older pupils are very well involved in school life and happily arrange the hall for assemblies, clear up after lunches and support younger children. Pupils enjoy the good, interesting and stimulating curriculum and the many clubs, village events and visits.

Leadership and management are good and the school provides good value for money. The headteacher gives very good leadership and management and has an accurate, if somewhat modest view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Staff and governors provide good support. The school's capacity to improve is good as demonstrated, for example, by considerably improved writing standards. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in evaluating and monitoring the school's work but are not fully effective in supporting the headteacher in maintaining pupils' good achievement in all subjects. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in terms of leadership and management, links with parents and curriculum planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure Year 4 pupils do as well in mathematics tests as they do in English.
- Extend the ways in which subject leaders improve pupils' standards and achievement in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement and standards are good because the teaching and curriculum are good and the school provides excellent care for each pupil. In Reception children make rapid progress and most reach the expected standards for children of this age. Pupils make good progress in the infant classes and reach above average standards in the end of Year 2 assessments. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties is also good. The considerable time and care taken to plan work to meet the needs of individual pupils in both the infant and junior classes means that all pupils are challenged and make good progress in their learning. Pupils in Year 4 achieve well and reach the challenging targets they are set, attaining exceptionally high standards in English and above average standards in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have excellent relationships with staff and one another. The school is a very happy and caring place in which all pupils make good progress in acquiring the numeracy and literacy skills which will help them in later life. Pupils know how to keep safe and say there are many people they can go to in school if they are worried. They love coming to school and this is reflected in the high attendance figures. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils have good manners and learn to respect themselves and others. They know that it is extremely important to eat healthy food and to take regular exercise. Pupils benefit from regular physical education coaching sessions and Years 3 and 4 pupils enjoy weekly swimming lessons.

Older pupils gently support younger children so that newcomers settle quickly. The school council is greatly involved in school life, having been responsible for purchasing a Buddy Bench and basketball hoops. Valuable e-mail links with schools and families across the world have been established because the school is a member of Global Learning Communities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. They flourish in this warm, supportive environment where their achievements are recognised, valued and praised.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching and learning enable all pupils to achieve well. Relationships are excellent, resulting in happy classrooms where pupils learn much. Pupils have challenging targets for improvement and teachers are beginning to encourage them to evaluate how well they are doing for themselves. All staff plan work carefully to match pupils' ages and abilities. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively in lessons. ICT captures pupils' interest and sustains their

concentration. Opportunities for pupils to practise their ICT skills are restricted due to a shortage of computers. Reception children love school as they learn through an exciting mix of work and play. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from good individual and group support which helps them to make good progress. Staff carefully record the standards reached and the progress all pupils make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Staff work very hard to make sure curriculum planning meets the needs of all pupils, particularly in mixed age classes. There is a strong commitment to pupils' enjoyment, and music and art feature prominently. The curriculum is skilfully adapted to meet the needs and abilities of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Reception children get off to an excellent start because they learn through a wide variety of practical and enticing experiences. For example, they weighed pumpkins before making pumpkin soup.

In Years 1 to 4 a start has been made to link subjects, such as ICT and English and there is scope for these links to be extended. Close links with local schools and schools in America enliven the curriculum through shared resources and experiences. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities, such as gardening, computers, sports and musical clubs. These, together with a very good number of visits, visitors and special days bring pupils' learning to life and have an extremely positive impact on their personal and social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes outstanding care of its pupils, which contributes effectively to their good progress, sense of well-being and to their great enjoyment of school. A parent wrote, 'All staff genuinely care about the children and their well being.' Pupils say they feel very safe and valued. Procedures to ensure they are kept safe and secure are well established. Good induction procedures help newcomers to settle quickly and happily. Pupils talk warmly of how their teachers 'care for them and help them learn' and they greatly appreciate the sports and other activities organised outside the school day. Clear literacy and numeracy targets in pupils' books ensure they know how they can improve their work. The school makes very good use of outside agencies which run self esteem and protective behaviour groups to support vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership is very good and has brought about considerable improvements since her appointment in January 2005. She has established strong links with parents and the local community. There is a sense of teamwork in the school. Staff, parents and governors are committed to school improvement. The school's

self-evaluation is accurate and takes account of the views of staff, pupils, governors and parents, leading to effective action to remedy identified weaknesses through the school improvement plan. Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching are successful in raising pupils' attainment. Subject leaders are not fully effective in supporting the headteacher in maintaining pupils' good achievement in all subjects.

The constraints of a small school mean that the headteacher has a very heavy workload and governors effectively support her in monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievements. Governors have no qualms in questioning the school about developments and procedures. The school has moved forward considerably over recent years, which bodes well for its continuing success.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

3 November 2006

Dear Children

St Leonards, Heath and Reach, VA Lower School, Thrift Road, Heath and Reach, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. LU7 0AX

Thank you so much for making my visit so enjoyable and for taking time to talk to me and to answer all my questions. I thought that you would like to hear what I found out about your school.

There are many good things happening in your school:

- All of you make good progress and reach good standards by the time you leave.
- You love school because teachers, teaching assistants, visitors and special events make learning interesting.
- You get on very well with one another and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers and other adults help you when you have problems. They make sure that you are safe and give you excellent advice about your work.
- The school is well organised. The headteacher together with all the staff make sure that you are happy and that this is a successful school.

Your headteacher knows exactly what could make your school even better. I agree with these views and also think that it would be really great if Year 4 pupils did as well in mathematics as in English tests. Also it would be good if staff helped the headteacher even more to improve your work in all subjects.

It was so good to find that all of you are very happy at school and doing so well and that your parents appreciate and value your school so highly.

Keep working hard and enjoying life at St. Leonards.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox

(Lead inspector)