



Lunts Heath Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111199
Local Authority Halton
Inspection number 288889
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Mark Madeley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wedgwood Drive
School category	Community		Widnes
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cheshire WA8 9RJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 4233322
Number on roll (school)	243	Fax number	0151 4206977
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr N Burdekin
		Headteacher	Mrs Dee Denton
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007	Inspection number 288889
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area of mainly owner-occupied housing to the north of Widnes. Most children are of White British heritage. The majority of children live near the school but about one fifth of them live further away and travel 2 miles or more daily to school. Few children are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average and no child currently has a statement of special educational need. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with strengths in children's personal development, the care, guidance and support offered to the children and their parents, and the work of the headteacher, which are all good. It gives satisfactory value for money. However, it is improving rapidly because all involved in the school have a clear view of the potential of the children in their care and how they can help them to achieve it. The headteacher has been instrumental in maintaining above average standards and improving children's progress, but because she has not been in post for very long, the school has not fully addressed all the areas for development from the last inspection. Governance has improved markedly and is satisfactory. Very good systems for checking children's progress are now in place. Effective management has improved teaching and learning, which had been unsatisfactory in some classes. The school's self-evaluation is good because it is based on robust checking systems. Children's rate of progress has improved in recent years. These successes indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Children start school with above average attainments. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps them make rapid progress. They join Year 1 as confident and capable learners. Through the rest of the school, children's achievement is satisfactory in response to at least satisfactory teaching. In the national tests in Year 6, children's results are above average overall and have been for four of the last five years. They are average in English because standards in writing are not high enough. In English, and to a lesser extent in mathematics and science, too few children reach the higher grade (Level 5) because teaching does not develop the learning of the more able sufficiently. All teachers now use the school's lesson planning format and make much greater use of assessment information to modify future planning to try to meet the needs of the children. Staff explain tasks clearly and children work hard at them. However, too often in some lessons, all children do the same task and this does not meet their varied needs. Some teachers use questioning exceptionally well to develop children's understanding of the concept taught but this is inconsistent. Occasionally, the whole class teaching goes on for too long and this asks too much of the concentration of the younger children. Teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy so children know how to improve their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Additional activities are good, helping children to develop good teamwork skills and stay healthy, but the school does not yet provide sufficient opportunities for children to develop and improve their writing skills in other subjects. The high quality art displays are a marked improvement on the last inspection and make the school a delightful place in which to work. In this respect, the Foundation Stage is a wonderland of colour, reflecting the high quality of children's work in that class. Children's personal development is good. They report that they feel very safe and well cared for in school. They know how to stay fit and take up the many chances to exercise offered by the school during lesson time and after school. They know that some things are not good for them, like alcohol, tobacco and harmful drugs. They like their headteacher and their school very much, as indicated by the consistently above

average attendance. Older children take the responsibilities given to them very seriously and carry them out to the best of their ability.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for children to develop and improve their writing skills in other subjects in order to raise standards in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that children make good progress through the school.
- Ensure that tasks set fully meet the needs of the more able children so that they achieve well.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most children are 'chatty' and confident when they join the Reception class. Good provision in the Foundation Stage successfully builds on their above average language and mathematics skills. They achieve well and most exceed the expected standards for their age when they join Year 1.

Children's progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, they reach results in the teacher assessments which are above average. In Key Stage 2, the governing body sets the school extremely challenging targets for the end of key stage tests, which the children almost reached in 2006. Standards in English are average whilst those in mathematics and science are above average. Progress is satisfactory overall. Over the last two years, the school has accurately identified past gaps in children's learning and improved the quality of teaching. In response, their rate of progress has improved. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress compared to their capabilities. Their needs are usually identified promptly and support, including additional programmes, is provided to help them to learn. Standards seen in lessons are better than those reached in the 2006 test results indicating that management's actions to improve learning are having a positive impact.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judged this aspect as satisfactory because it over emphasised the weakness robust checking had identified, but the inspection finds it to be good. Children like coming to school and their attendance is good. They like their headteacher and the changes she has made. They say that they feel safe from oppressive behaviour and are confident that should any bullying occur, it will be dealt with promptly. They also know how to keep themselves safe, for instance, when crossing the roads. Children enjoy taking exercise, for example, at break times when they use the wide range of games equipment. They know that eating healthily is also important and usually bring healthy choices in their lunch box or choose vegetables and fruit with their school lunch. Drinking water is available but children rarely drink during lessons. Children

learn about elections through voting for their school councillor. Those elected give the children a say in the management of the school and their ideas are often acted upon. All children behave very well in class. At play times, a few older children rush around the playground forgetting about the potential hazard this may cause to younger juniors. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school knows it could do more to improve children's spiritual and cultural development, but currently has other priorities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are keen to learn and all teachers build well on these positive attitudes. They are very well behaved in class because teachers use rewards well to motivate them. They also respond quickly and sensibly to the class teacher's instructions.

Teachers' skills at questioning children are at least satisfactory in all classes. There are some very good examples at the end of key stages when children are asked to explain methods or reasons for their answers, thus developing language skills and consolidating learning. Teachers have started to use their assessment skills to modify their plans for the rest of the week. They identify children who need additional help or those who need further challenge quite well but this is not consistent across the school yet. Lesson planning is improving, however some teachers do not consistently plan tasks which will challenge the thinking skills of the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of most groups of children and has some good features. The school offers a good range of extra clubs, such as fencing, football, art, computers and choir, all of which contribute well to children's enjoyment and knowledge. Visits and visitors to the school are used well as a stimulating focus for children's learning. The good programme for health education tells children how to stay fit and well and the majority take up this advice by exercising regularly. The extensive time spent on literacy and numeracy is having a satisfactory impact on children's learning. Insufficient opportunities are given to children to develop their writing in other subjects. Children's skills and knowledge in computing is improving because the facilities have improved significantly since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school was over modest in its judgement of satisfactory because the inspection finds it to be good. The vast majority of parents feel that their child is well cared for in school. Children report that they feel safe too. Procedures for safeguarding them

are in place, for instance, checks on personnel and risk assessments. The school provides a good range of information to parents. Annual reports are detailed and parents think that meetings with teachers are valuable and informative. Newsletters are helpful and the booklets on what will be studied this half term help parents to assist with their child's learning at home. Most parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities feel well informed about the additional support their child receives, but a minority would like clearer lines of communication between the school and themselves and the inspection agrees with this view. Teachers' marking is good. It tells children what they have done well and says what they need to do to improve further. Children know their individual literacy and numeracy targets and how to reach them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is providing the school with strong and purposeful leadership. The governing body and staff share her vision for the school and fully support her. She has put in place robust procedures for checking children's progress. This information is used well to show management the strengths and weaknesses of provision and inform the good quality forward planning. The quality of teaching had weaknesses, partly because performance management was not robust. A plan to improve teaching in all classes included the use of a local school to show effective teaching, and extensive support and training opportunities for teachers. This has been successful for all and some staff now demonstrate consistently good teaching. Subject coordinators have welcomed the chance to lead their subject. They have received training and have the non-contact time to check children's progress, but this work is at an early stage. They help improve teaching by modelling good practice for colleagues. Governance has improved. Governors are now involved in forward planning. Active committees keep a sound overview of the school's progress and finances.

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	3
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.

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

When we visited your school recently, we were delighted by the very confident way you spoke to us. Thank you for your contribution. We used your views, the views of your parents and a range of other information when coming to our judgements. Your school is satisfactory at present and it is improving fast because everyone is working hard together to improve the quality of teaching and other aspects of the school's work for you. At present you make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science, and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6 because the quality of teaching is satisfactory.

The staff are very caring and look after you very well. You told us you enjoy the visits you go on because they make learning interesting. The school has a good range of clubs and sports activities against other schools, including a town champion athletics team! They help you develop positive attitudes to learning as well as helping you understand how to live healthily. Your attendance is very good indeed - well done to you and your parents! Your behaviour is very good in class but a few of you can be a little 'excitable' at break times. You have a good understanding of how to improve your work because the teachers mark your work well. Your very good art work displayed around the school makes it a pleasure to walk along the corridors.

All schools need to continue to improve further and so we have asked your headteacher to do three things:

- give you more chances to improve your writing skills in subjects like history, geography and science
- ensure that you make good progress in all classes
- make sure that the more able children are given tasks which challenge them.

You can help your school improve further by always doing your best in every lesson and by making sure that your behaviour in the playground is just as good as the behaviour we saw in the classrooms. We hope that you are all proud of your school and the rapid progress it is making, thanks to the efforts of the headteacher, her staff and the governors. We wish you all the best for the future.