

Laira Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113278
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	289570
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Faysal Mikdadi

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Davey
Headteacher	Michael Snowden
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001
School address	Bramley Road Laira Plymouth PL3 6BP
Telephone number	01752 660427
Fax number	01752 255303

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Inspection number	289570

© 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

Laura Green is a large primary school with mainly White British pupils. It is housed in old Victorian buildings one of which has been refurbished. When children join the Reception Year, their communication and social skills are exceptionally low. There is an average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Laura Green provides a satisfactory education and has good features. Children join Reception with exceptionally low communication and social skills. They make satisfactory progress in language use and good progress in their social skills, gaining confidence in a secure and caring environment. Good care continues across the school so that pupils' self-esteem is successfully raised. Consequently, they are happy and well settled.

Pupils' achieve satisfactorily given their very low prior attainment. English skills are still weak. This was reflected in the well below average results in national tests in 2006. Results in mathematics and science were below average but better than those for English. Because of the school's strong focus on enhancing communication skills, there have been recent improvements in standards in speaking and listening but reading and writing remain weak. Overall, current standards, especially in mathematics and science, have improved and targets set for these subjects are likely to be achieved.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good direction that is instrumental in beginning to raise expectations of what pupils might achieve. He has improved the use of data to help track pupils' progress and created a united staff committed to raising standards. Middle leaders have been well supported and they are beginning to take effective action to improve achievement in the areas for which they are responsible.

Pupils say that they are happy in school. Reception Year children are settled and keen to respond to their caring teachers. Good care, guidance and support continue all through this inclusive school. Personal development and well-being are good. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving as more creative elements are being introduced. Enrichment activities are plentiful and parents speak well of this provision. Teachers have successfully turned the old accommodation into an attractive learning environment with colourful displays celebrating pupils' achievement.

Teaching is satisfactory with good features. Teachers' expectations are rising, leading to an improvement in current standards. However, expectations are not consistently high and as a result teaching does not always ensure that pupils cover as much ground as they might in each lesson.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in English, particularly in reading and writing, across the school.
- Ensure that teachers' expectations are consistently high so that all pupils achieve as much as possible in every lesson.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards improve steadily as they go through the school. Children start Reception with exceptionally low skills. They make satisfactory progress in reading and good progress in mathematical calculation. They also make particularly good progress in improving their social skills. However, their skills in writing remain at a low level. In Years 1 and 2 steady progress continues, but standards are still below expectations. While in 2006 results for the end of Year 2 were well below the national averages, there are signs of

improvement. Standards for current Year 2 pupils are below rather than well below average and there have been particular improvements in writing and mathematics.

The 2006 end of Year 6 results were significantly below national averages in English, mathematics and science. The weakest subject was English where pupils made unsatisfactory gains in relation to their starting points at the end of Year 2. For current Year 6 pupils there have been improvements in mathematics and science but standards in English are still too low. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from well targeted support and make good progress in relation to their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal, social and emotional development of children in the Reception Year is good. Children feel safe and secure with a strong sense of belonging. They enjoy school, as shown in one child's comment, 'We're going to have fun.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Behaviour is good. Pupils report that there is very little bullying and when it does occur, it is dealt with promptly and effectively by teachers. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and clearly enjoy their education. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Exclusion rates have been high but strategies to encourage and reward good behaviour have led to improvements.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school and know who to go to when they need help. They are also well informed about healthy lifestyles. They take part in a wide range of physical activities. Pupils make an appropriate contribution to the community and participate in various events, such as a 'Chinese Week'. They raise money for a variety of charities. The development of pupils' basic skills ensures sound preparation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most teachers have good subject knowledge and use appropriate methods to engage pupils' interest. Effective questioning extends pupils' knowledge and ability to express their ideas. Teaching assistants support pupils well. Occasionally, not all pupils achieve as much as they might in lessons. This is because teachers either do not set work to match pupils' differing abilities or because the work is not sufficiently challenging.

There are good systems for the assessment of English, mathematics and science and the information gathered is beginning to be used effectively to set individual and group targets. Assessment in other subjects is less well developed which leads to teachers and pupils not fully knowing what to do next to improve work further. Pupils are beginning to be involved in assessing their own work and are well aware of their targets.

In the Reception Year, parents come into school to help with their children's learning. This enables them to know how they can support their children at home. In Years 1 to 6, parents are told what their children need to do in order to improve and many try to help them to achieve their targets. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Reception Year the curriculum has a strong focus on promoting children's social, speaking, listening and mathematical skills. A balanced range of opportunities encourages independent and purposeful play. However, there is not enough opportunity for children to write independently for a range of purposes and this slows progress in this area. Good assessment and tracking enables early identification of children who need extra help especially with speech and language.

This provision for learners' needs is improving. Adaptations to the curriculum are bringing about improvements in achievement especially for mathematics in Years 1 and 2. There is still more to do to improve pupils' skills in reading and writing throughout the school. The introduction of a more creative curriculum is beginning to engage pupils' interest and promote their confidence as learners. Information and communication technology is well used to support learning across the curriculum. There is a good programme of physical education, which promotes safe and healthy lifestyles. A wide range of out of school clubs and community links extend pupils' interests and experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff maintain good levels of care and concern for pupils' well-being. One parent speaks for the majority when she says that 'staff have always been available to discuss my concerns'. Good systems for ensuring health and safety are in place and effective risk assessments are carried out. There are effective child protection procedures. Pupils, particularly those who need extra care and attention, are supported well. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Pupils' progress is well monitored which enables teachers to help them improve their work by explaining what they need to do next.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and they make good progress. This is because there are effective systems for the early identification of learning needs. These pupils are well supported and guided by teachers and teaching assistants. The school works effectively with parents and outside agencies to ensure that individual needs are met.

Pupils are well informed about the next phase of their learning and there are effective links with the community college to which most transfer at the end of Year 6. Children in the Reception Year receive good pastoral care with especially good support for children with learning difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's good leadership has resulted in the recent improvements in standards. He is spoken of well by parents as this comment illustrates, 'I am pleased and impressed by the attitude and professional approach given by the teachers and in particular by the headteacher.' He has set up strategies to ensure a more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and this is beginning to raise expectations of what pupils can do, although this is not yet consistent across the school. He has also created more effective tracking of pupils' progress. These

strategies have not yet shown through with improvements in test results although current standards show that challenging targets set for 2007 and beyond are likely to be achieved.

One result of these developments has been an improvement in subject leadership with leaders being empowered to lead their areas of responsibilities. The school has an agreed sense of purpose with an emerging strong team approach.

Governors are supportive but do not as yet challenge senior managers as rigorously as they could. Given the improvements made by the headteacher's leadership in creating a close and cohesive working team and the recent improvements in standards, the school has good capacity to improve further.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	3
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	2

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	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	3
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

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you also to the Reception class for inviting us in to share with your storytelling. We think that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the things that we found:

- You make steady progress in your learning.
- Laura Green is well led by the headteacher.
- Your behaviour is good and you have good relationships with each other and with your teachers and their assistants.
- Your teachers assess your work well and help you to improve it successfully.
- You are well looked after and cared for.
- The curriculum is becoming more interesting and you have lots of good activities outside the classroom.

We asked your school to improve the following:

- You need to be helped to improve your reading and writing skills.
- All your teachers need to make sure that you learn as much as possible in each lesson.

Once more, thank you very much for our successful visit.