



West Leigh Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114779
Local Authority SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
Inspection number 290025
Inspection date 7 November 2006
Reporting inspector Cheryl Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ronald Hill Grove
School category	Community		Leigh-on-sea
Age range of pupils	7-11		Essex SS9 2JB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01702478593
Number on roll (school)	512	Fax number	01702714812
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ian Johnson
		Headteacher	Mrs Cheryl Woolf
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

West Leigh Junior is a much larger than average primary school. It serves the local area but has an increasing number of pupils from out of the catchment area. It is very popular and always oversubscribed. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds with a small number of minority ethnic pupils. Attainment on entry is above average. Pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. The numbers of children eligible for free school meals and who have learning difficulties or disabilities are much lower than those found nationally. The school is well known locally and nationally for its high standards in music and swimming.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school is correct in judging itself to be outstanding. Pupils receive an excellent education which combines achieving exceptionally high standards with the enjoyment of a wide range of learning opportunities. There are two key factors in the school's continued success. First, the headteacher's and senior team's attention to detail within their excellent leadership and management and, second, the strong team work amongst staff. Its mission statement '..... that we will all be happy and successful', is met very well. This mission is evident in the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. Even though this is a large school, pupils are known well by all staff and say they are totally confident that someone will 'deal with' any concerns. Attendance is very good because they love coming to a school where they feel happy and secure. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and good manners commendable. Through their various responsibilities, membership of choirs and the school council and running clubs, pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. They attain very high standards in English and mathematics which, coupled with very good social and team-work skills, prepare them very well for their future.

The excellent curriculum means that teachers link subjects to make learning relevant and fun. Consequently, pupils are very keen to learn and through a good programme of personal, social and health education, develop a good understanding of how to keep safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. The school has very limited space for physical education activities but makes full use of its swimming pool and local parks to ensure pupils build up their fitness and stamina levels. The very good number of clubs, ranging from the Beano club to learning Mandarin contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of their school day. The school provides high quality opportunities for more able pupils and excellent teaching and support for those with learning difficulties. Consequently, pupils of all abilities make exceptional progress as they move through the school. By Year 6, standards are consistently exceptionally high. The outstanding academic guidance provided underpins the consistently good and often excellent teaching. As one parent wrote ' .. the established teaching staff are second to none - dedicated, caring and always willing to speak to parents and take action as necessary'. Teachers know what their pupils need to learn next to move them on in their learning and plan together in year teams to make lessons memorable and enjoyable. Pupils' work is always marked thoroughly, although there is some inconsistency in the way their personal targets for improvement are set and reviewed. The school's evaluation of its work is astute at all levels so that planning for further improvement is very clearly focused. Even though the last inspection judged the school to be 'very good' and there were no areas for improvement noted, there has been no complacency. Indeed, current standards are even higher and the learning opportunities much broader. The school provides very good value for money and the capacity for further improvement is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop and refine further the system for setting and reviewing pupils' personal learning targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress. By Year 6, standards have been consistently exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science. Standards in music, swimming, French and information and communication technology (ICT) are also very high. Achievement is outstanding. The school tracks pupils' progress systematically to ensure they are provided with the right support and teaching to help them do as well as possible. West Leigh Junior is far more successful than most schools in helping pupils who start the school at below average levels to attain good standards by Year 6 and, similarly, those who start above average, to attain exceptionally high standards.

Pupils achieve particularly high standards in English due to the strong links between subjects which provide interesting and meaningful opportunities for writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Attendance is very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and involve themselves enthusiastically in all that it has to offer. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. They flourish through the respect, care and consideration shown to them by adults and as a result they show outstanding levels of respect and care towards each other. This is especially noticeable in their impressive behaviour in the cramped playground. The school provides many and various opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop self-discipline. Pupils of all ages take their responsibilities seriously. For example, members of the lower school boys' choir arrive early for school for choir practice. Year 6 pupils delight in the responsibility of being in the 'playground squad' of helpers or a 'book buddy' for Year 3. Their involvement in 'Enterprise week' provides first hand experiences to learn how to run a profitable business.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The inspection confirms the school's judgement that the quality of teaching is never less than good and is often outstanding. Pupils would not be achieving so well and attaining such high standards unless this was the case. Throughout the school, there is a very positive learning atmosphere. A short visit to any classroom shows competent and skilful teachers who enjoy their work. Relationships are excellent between adults

and pupils. Key features of teaching are very high expectations, brisk pace and lively lesson content. Consequently, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are keen to work hard. Teaching for pupils who have learning difficulties is excellent because it provides many practical experiences to reinforce learning and ensure success as well as good self-esteem. Specialist teaching for ICT, French and music is very successful and results in very high standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and complemented by a notable range of clubs. It meets all statutory requirements and offers a much wider range of interesting and exciting activities than is usually found. The school achieves this in part by linking subjects. The strong team work is evident in the innovative ideas for lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and underpin the work of the school and pupils' success. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and comply with the latest government requirements. The very good liaison with the infant school ensures pupils settle in quickly and build on their previous learning. Similarly, good links with local secondary schools mean that pupils are helped to make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education. The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is used extremely well to make sure they reach challenging targets and make consistent, good progress. Very good links with parents means that they are well informed about school events, how well their child is doing and what they can do to help at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has encouraged and developed effective teamwork throughout the school. The collective strengths of the senior leadership team set an excellent example. The headteacher and two deputies have a detailed understanding of the quality of teaching and learning, what the data from tests and tracking tells them and how well the school is looking after its pupils. They make perceptive use of all this information when planning for further improvement. The senior team set very high expectations for staff to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as possible and they support them extremely well in doing this. For example, even though there is high quality teaching across the school, lessons are checked regularly and rigorously and staff are given suggestions for improvement and good ideas are shared. Termly planning is organised by one deputy, giving year group teams more time to concentrate on planning good learning opportunities for individual lessons. West Leigh Junior is clearly a very successful school; nevertheless the headteacher and staff are always seeking to improve the quality of education and care it provides. Staff are positively encouraged to attend courses to extend their knowledge.

Governors give the headteacher and staff their full support and challenge them to strive for further improvements.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

8 November 2006

Dear Children

West Leigh Junior School, Ronald Hill Grove, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. SS9 2JB

Thank you for showing such good manners and making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed the day I spent with you especially visiting the clubs and listening to the boys' choir - it was a super way to start my visit. There are so many good things going on in your school.

I think your school is excellent. Mrs Woolf and all the staff work very hard to make sure you all do as well as possible and have lots of interesting lessons, visits and clubs. Your teachers organise interesting lessons and you told me that lessons are fun. When I visited your classrooms, I was impressed with how well you behave and how hard you work - well done! You achieve excellent results in your English, maths and science tests as well as doing well in ICT, French and music. Having targets to help you improve your work is really useful. I noticed that there are different ways of setting targets so I have asked Mrs Woolf to help the teachers to work together to make sure the targets are set and checked up on in the same way.

I saw that the staff know you all very well and look after you. You told me that someone will always listen to your ideas and help you if you are worried. The school council is organised very well and it was good to see how responsible you are in representing the views of your classmates. In your small playground, I was really impressed with how well you play together and take care of one another - the 'playground squad' were doing a great job organising games.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy all the good things going on in your school.

Thank you all again.

All good wishes

Cheryl Thompson Lead inspector