



Leighswood School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131433
Local Authority WALSALL
Inspection number 299913
Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006
Reporting inspector Raymond Jardine

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Broadmeadow |
| School category | Community | | Walsall |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 | | West Midlands WS9 8HZ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01922 743621 |
| Number on roll (school) | 547 | Fax number | 01922 743620 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Lynn Levesley |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Jan Taylor |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26 March 2001 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Almost all of its pupils come from White British backgrounds and very few are at an early stage of speaking English. Pupils' social and economic backgrounds range widely but are broadly average overall. The proportion who have learning difficulties or disabilities is a little below average, although the proportion with statements of special educational need is average. Pupils enter the nursery with knowledge and skills that are typical of children nationally.

The school offers a range of extended services to the local community in its newly opened Children's Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Leighswood is a good school; it has some outstanding features. Pupils enjoy learning within the very encouraging and caring environment that pervades the school and they achieve well in most areas. Parents are very pleased with the school's influence on their children's education and they express confidence in the staff and its leadership. The headteacher provides strong leadership and direction focused on improving the quality of education and standards for all pupils in the school's care. Curriculum innovation is encouraged and this is helping to provide pupils with a well-rounded education. Their personal development is outstanding.

The provision for children in Foundation Stage is very well planned and managed and children consequently progress well, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 are typically above average. In relation to their average attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve well, most consistently so in English. Pupils' progress and achievements dipped in mathematics and science in 2005. The school's remedial actions to address these falls resulted in higher standards in 2006. Even so, improving the achievement of more able pupils in both these subjects rightly remains a current school priority. Teaching and learning are good and pupils really enjoy lessons. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils' work is regularly marked and assessed but the quality of guidance pupils receive and their involvement in reflecting on their own progress to their targets varies considerably across the school. There is some very good practice on which the school can build to implement its good policy fully.

The curriculum is broad and innovative, for example, in providing a modern foreign language and using information and communication technology (ICT) imaginatively to raise standards. Pupils are much involved in school life through the many additional activities that they enjoy. Their behaviour is excellent. The opportunity the school provides through its international links to learn about other cultures prepares pupils well for life in a multi-cultural society. The contribution they make to their own and to the wider community is excellent and pupils learn to be very caring and respectful of others. They increasingly eat healthily because of the good knowledge they are acquiring on health matters.

Leadership and management are good and are a key reason for the school's success. Staff are confident and outward looking and they use partnerships with outside organisations very well to help enrich pupils' experiences. The school's monitoring and self-evaluation is broadly based and systematic so that weaknesses are diagnosed and tackled. Governors are centrally involved in the school's management and monitoring its work. The school is consequently well placed to improve further and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and pupils' achievements, particularly in mathematics and science, by ensuring that the more able pupils are consistently challenged.

- Ensure that the quality of feedback to pupils on their next steps in learning and their involvement in reflecting on their work is consistent across the school by building on the good practice that already exists.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage receive a very good start to their education. The curriculum is stimulating, very well planned and taught. Consequently, they progress well and achieve the goals expected by the end of Reception and some exceed them. This good progress continues in later years so that standards in Year 2 are consistently above average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make better progress than the average for schools nationally, most consistently so in English, and pupils achieve above average standards. However, in 2005 pupils' progress dipped considerably in mathematics and science, particularly mathematics. The school took prompt action to address these falls by focussing attention on improving girls' achievement and pupils' scientific enquiry skills. The 2006 results were higher in both these subjects. The school's targets were exceeded, although these should be more challenging. Pupils' current progress demonstrates that improvements are being sustained this year but there is still work to be done to ensure that some more able pupils achieve as well as they can, as the school acknowledges in its improvement plan. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are provided for well and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Respect and consideration for others are central to the school's work and all adults are consistent in expecting the best behaviour and effort from pupils. Working relationships are very good and pupils' behaviour during lessons and at other times is excellent. Play and lunchtimes are very pleasant social occasions and pupils say that any disagreements or instances of bullying are rapidly resolved. Attendance is typically good.

Pupils develop into very polite, thoughtful, confident and articulate young people. These personal qualities, coupled with their strong basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, stand them in very good stead for the future. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and the curriculum provides them with an exceptionally wide range of opportunities to learn about the wider world. Pupils know what they have to do to stay safe and healthy and are putting their knowledge into practice. Many participate in the wide range of sporting activities and after school clubs. Pupils also contribute to the community by raising substantial sums for charity. The school council provides an effective force for change; it has, for example, prompted the introduction of healthier school lunches and the installation of playground 'friendship benches' for pupils who feel lonely or sad.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff go out of their way to build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem and, as a result, pupils are eager and highly motivated to contribute to lessons. Across the school pupils are managed well and high expectations of pupil behaviour result in calm, purposeful and focused learning in all classrooms. Much teaching in school is challenging and stimulating and the high priority given to developing pupils' creativity brings an added vibrancy to pupils' learning experiences. Pupils' literacy skills are consistently taught well and opportunities are rarely missed to put these to the test in innovative drama, cultural and enterprise initiatives. The marking of pupils work is regular but its quality varies. At its best, it gives clear pointers for improvement and pupils are given a chance to reflect on what they could do better to achieve their targets. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum quality is good and some aspects are outstanding. Good provision is made for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Whilst those with learning difficulties and disabilities are provided for well, the school is currently working to ensure that higher-attaining pupils consistently achieve as well as they can in mathematics and science. The school goes the extra-mile in providing learning experiences that fill the pupils with excitement and enjoyment and which make them immensely proud of their school. Learning a foreign language, involvement in a plethora of musical and dramatic productions, links with local and schools abroad and participation in innovative creative and enterprise initiatives make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. This is further embellished by a very good range of visits, visitors and after school clubs which promote the importance of following a healthy lifestyle and help to make a significant contribution to the school and local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's supportive and caring ethos contributes much to the good progress pupils make in their work and personal development. The standard of pastoral care is high and pupils feel safe and very well looked after. There are very effective arrangements for the induction of children into nursery and pupils' transfer to secondary school. Good use is made of external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported effectively. There are thorough arrangements for safeguarding pupils and regular training keeps staff fully up-to-date

with current requirements. Procedures for promoting day-to-day health and safety are rigorous and clear.

The school has good systems for monitoring pupils' progress towards targets in reading, writing and mathematics which it is planning to extend to include science. Regular reviews help ensure that additional support is directed to where it is most needed. The guidance pupils receive on how to achieve their targets and their involvement in reviewing them, though good in some year groups, varies considerably in quality, as the school has identified in recent monitoring.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team are very experienced and provide good leadership. There are good arrangements in place for staff's performance management. These are helping to improve teaching quality because training is closely linked to both individual needs and school priorities. Systems for monitoring and reviewing the school's work are well established, broadly based and effective in helping the school diagnose its strengths and weaknesses. Middle managers are now more central to the school's management, a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Parents and pupils are consulted and their views acted on, for example, in improving parents' understanding of how mathematics is taught so that they can better support their children at home. The school's improvement plan is consequently soundly based and has clear criteria for evaluating progress in its priorities. The impact of these effective management systems is seen in the good progress that most pupils now make and reversing a decline in mathematics and science standards.

Governors are very experienced and bring important expertise to the school. They work very well with the headteacher to help shape the school's direction and to ensure that school priorities are successfully addressed. They were closely involved in consultations and plans to extend the range of services the school offers the community through its new Children's Centre.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| 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? | 1 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| 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 | 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? | 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

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| 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

11 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Leighswood Primary School, Broadmeadow, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 8HZ

Thank you for the warm welcome that we received when we visited your school recently. We spoke with many of you in lessons and discussions. The views you gave us helped to confirm what parents, staff and governors had to say about your school. I thought you would like to know what we found out about the quality of education that you receive. I was impressed with:

- Your excellent behaviour and the respect that you show each other and to adults.
- The wide range of visits, visitors and links with other schools abroad that help you to understand the lives of those with different cultural backgrounds.
- Your enjoyment and involvement in lessons that helps you to make good progress
- Your very good contribution to the school and wider community through your school council, involvement in performances, and the money you raise for charities.
- The way you are maturing into polite, thoughtful and confident young people.

We think that you go to a good school. The staff and governors look after you well and provide many interesting and imaginative opportunities for you to learn about the wider world. Teachers and their assistants work very hard to make your lessons interesting and varied. They are constantly looking for ways to make your education even better. We agree with Mrs Taylor that more of you can achieve high standards in mathematics and science and the school is working to ensure that this happens. The school is also going to ensure that you get even better guidance on what you need to do to achieve your targets. You can help your teachers by using your targets to assess the quality of your own work, especially in mathematics. We know that some of you are good at doing this.

With all good wishes for your future at Leighswood School,

Raymond Jardine

Lead Inspector