



# St Leonard's CofE (A) First School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124381  
**Local Authority** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 299931  
**Inspection dates** 21–22 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Ceri Morgan HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Ipstones
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9		ST10 2LY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01538 266292
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	46	<b>Fax number</b>	01538 266292
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	C M Scargill
		<b>Headteacher</b>	David Mellor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–9	21–22 February 2007	299931

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Leonard's First School is much smaller than average. It serves a rural community. There are currently no pupils entitled to free school meals and a low proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds although there are some in the early stages of learning English. The school has emerged from a lengthy period of staffing instability during which it was made subject to special measures in November 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

St Leonard's First school has continued its recovery from a period of difficulty and is now satisfactory. There is now a settled staff committed to continued improvements in standards. In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school is a caring and thoughtful community where pupils thrive. The spiritual development of the pupils is a particular strength and is evident in the secure relationships throughout. The pupils help and encourage each other and behaviour is good. The staff know the pupils well and work hard to generate an atmosphere of calm and orderly activity which is helping to improve the rate of progress. In particular, the contribution made by support staff is of high quality. Pupils are kept safe and encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and show concern for each other. As a result, the personal development of all pupils is good overall.

Achievement and standards have continued to improve and are now in line with national expectations or better. In 2006 there was a significant step forward in the standards reached by pupils aged seven for example, and almost half of all pupils reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics. This was not reflected in writing where results were lower but still satisfactory. The school is aware of this and has suitable plans to improve writing. Standards in mathematics are more variable, although these too were good in 2006. Standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some variations between subjects. Literacy lessons are generally better taught than mathematics, although there are still too few opportunities for writing in all subjects. The quality of teachers' planning has improved but does not always offer enough challenge for more able pupils. The progress made by pupils during lessons is now satisfactory and the assessment of how well pupils are doing is secure and accurate. Teaching is noticeably better in lessons where a brisk pace and high challenge is evident, although on occasions opportunities for stretching pupils further are missed. The pupils respond well to challenge and say, 'We like to work hard.' Some are more explicit and still say, 'We think we can work harder.' Inspectors agree with the pupils.

There is a strong team ethos established and it is sensitively managed by the headteacher. He is supported well in this by all staff. There are some aspects of leadership which the school recognises remain to be improved. For example, the school improvement plan, although not yet complete, shows too few targets and lacks evaluation in parts. Some actions required are not taken with enough urgency. Monitoring of teaching is now taking place but school improvement planning is too informal at times. The school has made satisfactory progress on all areas identified in the previous inspection and is now well placed to continue this improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards of writing.

- Establish more robust arrangements for implementing the required changes following any monitoring and evaluation.
- Sharpen the targets set for individual pupil progress and use these more effectively in teachers' and school improvement planning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The standards reached by pupils aged seven in 2006 were good. About half of all pupils reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics. Reading standards are good across the school and in 2006 three quarters of all pupils aged nine reached a level higher than national expectations. Pupils' speaking and listening skills, especially in the Foundation Stage class, are good and an emerging area of strength.

Despite this buoyant picture, the school's improved tracking of pupils' progress now shows some areas which are less consistent, such as mathematics in Years 3 and 4. The school has set more ambitious targets for 2007 and is optimistic that the improvements in standards reached in 2006 will be maintained in 2007 for pupils aged seven. It acknowledges that this is ambitious and has put in place extra support in English although have yet to do so in mathematics.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and are well prepared for their future learning. Similarly, standards in other subjects are at least satisfactory with some that are good, such as in art.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The school prepares pupils for the future by encouraging them to become confident and polite individuals who treat each other with respect. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. One pupil said, 'The teachers look after us and sort out our problems.' Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. The school is aware that cultural development is satisfactory and that pupils need to increase their knowledge of cultures that are different from their own. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They appreciate the lunchtime 'huff and puff' scheme and the healthy drinks and meals because they encourage pupils to be active and eat healthily. The school council meet once a week and makes a good contribution to the school and local community through its fundraising activities. The school council is looking forward to teaching other children playground games during morning break times.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers and support staff work well together to encourage pupils to make sound progress. Support staff make a particularly positive contribution to learning when they are fully involved in all parts of the lessons. Pupils respond enthusiastically when they are given opportunities to talk in pairs and they are asked to explain their work. When pupils know exactly what they need to do by the end of the lesson and teachers show them how to complete their work, they make better progress. However, this good practice is not consistent throughout the school. In the weaker lessons teachers still talk for too long, reducing the opportunities for pupils to work independently. There are also occasions where pupils are required to complete too many worksheets without direct teaching.

Pupils make less progress when their activities are not carefully matched to their learning needs and do not challenge their thinking. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. For example, there is a noticeable difference in the quality of advice given to pupils in mathematics and English. In English it is much more precise and helpful because pupils are told exactly what they need to do to improve and given the chance to correct their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of the children in the mixed age classes. The school enriches the curriculum by actively encouraging pupils to take part in a range of competitions and themed weeks. A recent example involved pupils designing chef hats as part of the British Food event. Winners received a cookery book and apron from the owners of the village shop who sponsored the event. Experiences like this help develop well the skills necessary for the pupils' future economic well-being. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to cover all areas of learning and to develop children's independence and confidence. As a result, children have a secure start to their life in the school. Provision for literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology is satisfactory. This is helping pupils to improve their basic skills. The school is increasing the opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

A recently introduced writing club using the new computers is proving particularly popular with pupils. Almost half of them attend and enjoy taking part in a range of writing activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils receive a good level of care and support. This helps them to develop positive attitudes and results in good behaviour. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils say that they know they are doing well when their teachers tell them and give them a stamp! Pupils remarked that they had learning targets for mathematics and literacy, but were sometimes unsure of their individual targets. They are also occasionally unclear about what they needed to do to achieve their targets. Teachers and support staff work well together to provide appropriate support for the pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed with pupils and their parents. This is helping them to make satisfactory progress. The school now has in place secure arrangements for child protection and health and safety. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet national requirements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership of the school is satisfactory and improving. The headteacher continues to lead the development of the school with sensitivity and an increasing determination to consolidate progress. He has the confidence of the whole community, including the pupils, and an increasingly accurate view of the school's priorities. In the last year he has managed to implement many of the required changes, including better systems for monitoring the progress pupils make and tighter checks on the quality of teaching. He is aware that this will continue to be a priority for some time to come and needs to be done with greater urgency.

Others have contributed well to this recovery, not least governors who have continued to hold the school fully to account for standards and progress. The contribution of subject leaders to regular assessment in their subjects has also helped secure the required improvements.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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**

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work, joining you for lunch, and seeing you at play. You are polite, friendly and well behaved. We could see from your lessons that you try your best and work well with each other. Well done!

Thank you for sharing your work with us and telling us what you like about your school. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and that your teachers take good care of you. You also told us that you appreciate the huff and puff activities because they help to keep you fit and healthy.

We think your school council does a good job by raising money for different charities and thinking of ways that they can help in the school. The members are looking forward to teaching you lots of playground games. We agree with the members of the school council that this is a good idea.

Your headteacher, all the adults that work in the school, and the governors are working hard and they know what they need to do to make your school even better. We have asked Mr Mellor and your teachers to:

- help you do even better with your writing
- make sure that plans to improve the school happen more quickly
- use your learning targets to plan your work and the work of the school so that you all do as well as you can.

We enjoyed our two days with you and wish you all the very best for the future.