

Leighton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111065
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310493
Inspection date	7 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	493
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J McDonough
Headteacher	Mr Glyn Turner
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
School address	Minshull New Road Crewe Cheshire CW1 3PP
Telephone number	01270 214402
Fax number	01270 251086

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects; the achievement of pupils and the standards they reach; the impact of the curriculum and care, guidance and support on pupils' personal development; and aspects of leadership and management. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage and for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities was also evaluated. Other areas, seen in less detail, are mentioned in the report where appropriate. The inspection found no evidence to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation form, were not justified. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records. The school's documentation was scrutinised and there were first hand observations, as well as discussion, with staff and pupils.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school serving a socially diverse area on the outskirts of Crewe. The school has a designated 12 place unit for pupils, aged four to nine, who have moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the overall proportion in the school is below average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. Of the small proportion from minority ethnic groups, few are at an early stage of speaking English. An average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has achieved several national awards for curriculum development, including the Geography Gold Quality Mark, Healthy Schools, Family learning and Quality in Study support.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Leighton provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Leadership and management are inspirational. This has an extremely positive impact on outcomes in terms of pupils' achievement and the quality of care, guidance and support they receive. Pupils really do enjoy school. When the doors open at 08.30 they begin immediately to flood into their classrooms to finish off work, prepare for the day or to meet friends at the breakfast club. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Attendance is above average. Politeness and good manners are consistent features of pupils' outstanding behaviour. By the time they leave Leighton they are self-assured, sensible and prepared well to meet the challenges of their next schools. Pupils are fully aware of the importance of following a healthy diet and keeping fit. The school council is watchful to ensure that snacks and lunch menus offer healthy options. 'Walk to school week', the 'golden mile' (a measured walk around the school grounds) and an exciting range of sports opportunities help to justify pupils' three-times achievement of the Activemark Gold Award. The school council gives pupils an active voice in school affairs, resulting in improved facilities both inside and outside the school building.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Standards, which are consistently well above average at both key stages, have risen year on year over the last five years. Standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 in the 2007 national tests were exceptionally high. Nevertheless, there is no complacency on the part of school leaders. Highly successful intervention in Key Stage 1, begun in September 2006, resulted in improved mathematics standards in the 2007 national assessments. A whole school focus on reading and writing has resulted in some astonishingly good work in literacy. Very notable examples are the works on Macbeth by pupils in Year 1 and A Midsummer Night's Dream by pupils in junior classes. The outstanding quality of teaching and learning, accounts for pupils' excellent progress. Teachers have built up their subject knowledge and expertise to exceptional levels; consequently, lessons are consistently planned well and challenge all pupils whatever their abilities. A typical lesson was in Year 6 where pupils were given the recipe for a Christmas pudding then asked to work out the amounts of ingredients needed for different numbers of people. The challenge made demands on pupils' knowledge and understanding of number and measures, mental agility and problem solving skills. There was an additional 'life-related' challenge for good measure and, importantly, the lesson was great fun. The high quality of lessons is rooted in the vibrant and exciting curriculum. Teachers use the curriculum very creatively. Literacy, art, drama, history and information and communication technology, for example, may be linked in a single topic so that pupils can develop their skills more effectively and with greater purpose. The outstanding range and quality of additional activities contributes to a curriculum of exceptional richness. This significantly promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning and is reflected in the breadth of their achievements.

Pupils, who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who attend the designated unit, are equally well provided for. Highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants in the unit provide carefully planned lessons and activities that ensure pupils' excellent progress. Consequently, when they are integrated into main stream classes, these pupils achieve equally as well as others.

Pupils' progress is monitored rigorously and achievement records confirm the system's effectiveness. The school has developed an impressive system to provide additional support for pupils, where needed, throughout the school, including the small number for whom English

is an additional language. A thorough analysis of pupils' individual needs triggers a personalised learning plan involving input from all staff. Typically, this may include attendance at after school literacy or numeracy workshops, working alongside the more able pupils, one-to-one intervention, or specific social and emotional support. As a result, all pupils make outstanding progress in relation to their individual targets.

Parents agree overwhelmingly that their children are in safe hands. A consensus of views is that their children are happy in school and that both they and parents enjoy excellent relationships with staff. Pupils feel safe. They say emphatically that there is no bullying. Play-leaders take on the responsibility of seeing that younger pupils are safely engaged during playtimes. Pupils confirm that their safety is given very high priority. They are made fully aware of potential hazards around the school, as well as those surrounding drugs and other substances. They know of the importance of secure relationships and are very well enabled to make informed choices about their personal safety and well-being. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. The learning mentor is highly regarded by pupils who know they are always listened to and that concerns placed in the 'worry box' are dealt with sensitively. Academic guidance is extremely good. Procedures for keeping track of pupils' progress and achievement are excellent.

The visionary leadership of the headteacher has been a guiding factor in the school's success. He has enabled the skills of staff members, whatever their role, to flourish and, in doing so, has established systems for monitoring the school's performance in which nothing is left to chance. All who work in the school know how they are accountable for pupils' achievement. Links with schools, colleges, businesses and industry not only enrich pupils' learning but also provide opportunities for staff to improve their management skills. The work of the coordinator for special educational needs (Senco) is an exceptional model of good practice. Besides overseeing the excellent progress of vulnerable learners in the school, she has trained staff in the delivery of literacy and numeracy programmes and very successfully led programmes in education and skills for parents. Governors are extremely effective. They act as crucial partners in evaluating the school's effectiveness and ably demonstrate foresight and astuteness in the way finances are managed to provide outstanding value for money. Stringent monitoring by senior leaders ensures that teaching and learning are increasingly effective throughout the school. The effects of this are seen in consistently rising standards. Subject leaders report to governors on progress made in their areas so that all leaders have an accurate view of the school's success. Given the highly effective monitoring procedures, there is outstanding capacity for the school to maintain current standards and the quality of education for its pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage is exceptionally well managed and provides children with an outstanding start to their education. School data indicate that children's skills and knowledge are broadly at the level expected nationally when they enter Nursery, though a significant number are below expectations for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children make outstanding progress throughout the Foundation Stage because of the high quality teaching they receive. Assessment is used exceptionally well to build on each step of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, all achieve as expected for their age and more than half achieve above those levels. Teachers plan an exciting range of adult-led activities and those which children choose themselves. These provide excellent opportunities for language development. A good example was the groups of Reception children who toured the school with torches,

talking about dark places and discussing different sources of light with their teachers and teaching assistants. Classrooms are lively and stimulating, which is why children are happy and excited to arrive in school. Links between outdoor physical development and other areas of learning, including personal, social and emotional development, are excellent. Children quickly become confident learners eager to explore the world around them. Outstanding relationships have been established with parents so that many feel equipped to share in the process of their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- This outstanding school knows itself very well and is taking steps that it has already identified to make it even better. As a result, no issues for improvement are raised.

Annex A

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Inspection of Leighton Primary School, Crewe CW1 3PP

I am sure you will remember that two inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. On behalf of us both I must thank you for your warm and friendly welcome. You made us feel quite at home and we enjoyed talking to you very much. We were greatly impressed by your excellent behaviour and politeness and the way in which you all work so hard. You take very good care of each other and know how important it is to keep fit and eat healthily. Your attendance is good. That is very important, so keep it up!

You have an outstanding school. Your headteacher and teachers, in fact everyone who works in the school, do an excellent job in taking care of you and helping you all to achieve as well as you do. You told us how much you enjoy lessons and we saw for ourselves how much fun they are.

Everyone is extremely pleased that you reach such high standards in your work and, of course, want you to continue in that way. Your headteacher and school governors already know how to make your school even better. You can help by keeping up your hard work, making the most of those wonderful after-school clubs and continuing to be as healthy and happy as you are at present.