

# Leadgate Community Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114039
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311461
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tom Grieveson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	99
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Cain
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Alder Grove Leadgate Consett County Durham DH8 7RH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 502937
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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Leadgate County Junior is a smaller than average sized school situated in North West Durham. It draws its pupils mainly from the neighbouring infant school and most pupils live in the local village area, although a small number travel from further afield. A higher than average percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Similarly a greater proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities than seen nationally. The school is exclusively White British. The school has successfully acquired a number of awards for its work. These include accreditation for its anti-bullying strategy; a Basic Skills award; Healthy School status and recognition for its international links. In addition, an Investors in People award has been gained for the manner in which the school's leadership develops its workforce.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Leadgate Community Junior school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It has particular strengths in the way it promotes pupils' personal development and well-being and in the high level of care it offers. Almost all parents who responded expressed their high regard for the school and its work.

The headteacher is managing the school well through a period of change. After many years of stable staffing, new teachers have been recently appointed to replace those who have retired. Existing staff are coping admirably with the additional responsibilities of managing a broad range of subjects, while providing effective support, to help new colleagues become established. The school is well focused on those areas requiring improvement and is strengthening its capacity to improve further. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Most pupils enter the school at age seven with standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are above average. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning at Key Stage 2 and in recent years have reached standards which are broadly in line with national average. In 2006, more pupils attained higher levels in reading, mathematics and science than seen nationally, although no pupils achieved level 5 in writing.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although there are elements of good teaching in each class. All teachers display good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their work. This ensures that the large majority of pupils are motivated to learn and keen to take part in activities. The school's assessment procedures, however, are not sufficiently helpful to teachers when planning learning. Consequently, the needs of all pupils are not consistently met in lessons and this limits the progress that many are capable of making. In addition, teachers do not regularly track pupils' progress and this restricts their ability to identify those who are underachieving and to intervene to remedy matters.

The curriculum is good; it is well organised and enriched by an extensive variety of additional activities. Good use is made of visits and visitors to extend pupils' learning. The school places a high priority on the care it provides, ensuring it is both effective and extensive. Pupils know they are well looked after and this provides them with the security and confidence to tackle their work and form the positive relationships which are so evident within the school community. Vulnerable pupils and those at risk of isolation are well supported through the helpful 'buddy system.'

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils clearly enjoy school and are proud to speak about its achievements. Their behaviour is also good. The majority demonstrate both maturity and responsibility towards their studies and each other. A small proportion of schools judged to be satisfactory but with areas of underperformance will be monitored in accordance with the protocol published in November 2006.

### What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards by improving:

- the quality of the school's assessment information so that teachers are able to make better use of it when planning activities which consistently meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- the use of on-going, day to day assessments to improve teachers understanding of the progress being made by pupils and to identify and tackle under-achievement where it occurs.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school has been mainly above average over time. They do best in reading and mathematics, where more achieve the higher levels than seen nationally. They do less well in writing, although standards are above average. In 2006, girls attained more highly than boys in English, particularly in reading, although boys did better in mathematics.

By the age of 11, the majority of pupils have made satisfactory progress. In 2006, standards in English and mathematics were just above national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils attained the higher level in reading, mathematics and science, but none did so in writing. In 2007, provisional results indicate that standards in English and mathematics were below national average although most pupils achieved in line with their targets in both subjects.

The majority of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. In most instances, their learning needs are well met through the carefully targeted help they receive from teaching assistants whose time is effectively programmed to provide support for them.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and these are real strengths of the school. Pupils are polite and well mannered; relationships between all members of the school community are extremely positive. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere in the school. Pupils feel safe and know that any problems will be quickly resolved by staff and other pupils. This helps to reinforce their positive attitudes to school and their work.

The large majority of pupils enjoy school, work hard and are keen to learn. Most demonstrate good behaviour in classrooms and around the school. The majority of pupils understand what is expected of them in lessons and they quickly settle to work. However, some of the youngest pupils recently admitted into Year 3, lack independent learning skills and remain overly dependent upon adults to undertake tasks. Pupils' attendance has improved steadily and is in line with national rates.

Pupils show their commitment to healthy living through their enjoyment of physical activity, their choice of healthy meal options at lunchtime and their support for the fruit tuck shop. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, incidents of poor behaviour are rare. The school buddy system works effectively and pupils who feel isolated or vulnerable are well supported. Pupils demonstrate a very clear sense of care, support and respect for each other.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are however good features which are consistent across all classes. Teachers are enthusiastic about their work, have good subject knowledge and show evident enjoyment in working with pupils. They make the purpose of lessons clear and this generates pupils' interest and provides a focus for learning. Consequently, most pupils demonstrate an accurate understanding of what they are expected to do and display a positive commitment to undertake their work.

The activities provided in many lessons, however, do not adequately meet the learning needs of all pupils. This occurs because teachers are not yet tracking the progress being made by individual pupils sufficiently well and the school's assessment information does not provide them with enough detailed information on which to base their lesson planning. Consequently, activities are often not matched well to the capabilities of all pupils. This results in some less able pupils being confused about how to undertake classroom activities, while other more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. In both cases, it leads to underachievement.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements. Pupils study the full range of subjects and this is enhanced by numerous visits to places of interest and through the use of external visitors. Local high school staff ensure that pupils enjoy opportunities to learn French. Pupils study other cultures and religions and the school's involvement in the Comenius project ensures they have good knowledge of life in other European countries. Pupils' future economic well-being is well promoted. They benefit through regular opportunities to study commerce and enterprise which includes visits to local businesses, laboratories and, from this year, to the science department at Durham University. Pupils enjoy extensive opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities which adds to their enjoyment of school and enriches the curriculum.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The care and guidance pupils receive are good but the manner in which the school tracks their progress and assesses their learning lacks rigour and impedes the progress of too many pupils. Pastoral support is well developed and the school rightly prides itself on the level of care and welfare it provides. Arrangements for safeguarding, including those for child protection, are firmly in place and regularly reviewed. Good attention is given to all health and safety matters.

Pupils are aware of their short term curricular targets and take note of the increasingly helpful comments provided by staff. However, they are given insufficient opportunities to reflect meaningfully upon their own work. While there are regular opportunities for pupils to talk about their work with staff, these conversations are not sufficiently detailed to help deepen pupils' understanding of how they can improve and in which areas. The school collates performance information about pupils' during the year and reviews the progress which they make. This provides a general summary of how well pupils are progressing, but is not helpful enough to teachers when planning learning. The school is starting to change the way it tracks pupils' progress to ensure that their work is monitored more regularly, but this work is recent

and there is no discernable impact yet on the progress which pupils are making. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally well met through the support offered by a dedicated team of teaching assistants. Links with the adjacent infant school are improving and this helps to smooth the process of transition for pupils into Year 3. The school also successfully prepares the pupils for their transfer at age 11 to local secondary schools.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are taking specific actions to improve matters. The headteacher enjoys the support and commitment of staff and governors. She places significant emphasis on creating good links with external partners in order to strengthen opportunities for the pupils both within and beyond the school. Monitoring arrangements are in place to check the work of teachers and to help bring about improvements in classroom practice and they are mainly effective. Knowledge gained from this work is shared honestly with staff and provides a suitable basis for performance management. Many governors are long standing and the governing body demonstrates dedication and high ambition for the school and its pupils, and expresses confidence in its future. They have a keen understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide an appropriate balance between robust challenges to the school to improve its performance, while offering support to tackle the difficulties which the school faces. In particular this involves managing the school's resources to cope with a falling pupil roll, the maintenance of a large site and the associated problems of an ageing building. Financial management is secure; the school's finances are managed carefully and efficiently ensuring that the school achieves satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

28 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leadgate Community Junior School, Durham, DH8 7RH

You will recall that I visited your school recently to carry out an inspection. The report is now complete and I would like to tell you what it contains.

Firstly, can I thank you for making my visit so enjoyable and for all the help you gave me. In particular I would like to thank those members of your school council who talked to me about your school. They clearly enjoy their work and are very proud to represent you all.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. It does particularly well in helping you to develop your personal skills and gives you a high level of good quality care. You also enjoy a broad curriculum which provides you with many exciting opportunities. Your headteacher Mrs. Cain and all the staff work very hard on your behalf. They spend a great deal of time preparing lessons and resources to help you learn. This ensures that you make satisfactory progress in your learning.

I was particularly impressed by your good behaviour and attitudes to learning in classrooms. You work together in lessons very well. Yours is clearly a caring school, you deserve much credit for the way you help each other and make sure that no pupil feels lonely or worried. Your commitment to eating healthily and your participation in sport are good.

I have asked Mrs. Cain and the staff to improve the following:

- Firstly, I would like the information which the school collects about how you are progressing to be made more useful to teachers, so that when they are planning lessons the activities are always carefully matched to your needs.
- Secondly, I would like the teachers to keep regular checks on how you are doing in lessons so that those who are struggling receive all the help they need to improve.

Please thank your parents for the comments they provided on their questionnaires. They are very pleased with your school and grateful for the hard work and efforts of the staff. Perhaps you can all think of ways in which you can help your teachers to make the changes necessary so that Leadgate Community Junior School can become even better in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Grieveson HMI