

Lee Chapel Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114897
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311745
Inspection date	6 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Helen Ranger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	437
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joyce Waylett
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2002
School address	The Knares Basildon Essex SS16 5RU
Telephone number	01268 474177
Fax number	01268 477390

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the features that make pupils' personal development outstanding;
- the main characteristics of teaching and learning;
- how the school is acting to close the gap between standards in reading and writing.

The inspector collected evidence from observations of lessons and extra-curricular activities, samples of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. She analysed a very large number of questionnaires and letters from parents. The main documents used by the school in monitoring and strategic planning were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This large primary school admits two thirds of pupils from its immediate locality, and the rest come from a wider area. It is popular with parents and oversubscribed. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but one in seven comes from a wide range of other ethnic groups. A very small number are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. When pupils join the school in Reception, their attainment covers a wide range but, overall, is below the levels expected for four-year-olds, particularly in speaking and listening.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Lee Chapel Primary is very ambitious for its pupils and rightly considers that its overall effectiveness is outstanding. This is because the leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher is described by the senior staff as 'inspirational'. Her vision for the school and the spirit of teamwork that she has established are key to the school's success. Staff training and development have a very high priority, resulting in a very competent team of teachers, teaching assistants and administrators. The site manager's team and catering staff play a full role in providing a safe, healthy and welcoming environment for the pupils. Staff receive excellent support from governors, who are very involved in the school's management. Governors question and challenge the staff appropriately and monitor standards and provision very effectively.

There is an exceptionally strong partnership with parents. Many offered their views of the school during the inspection and the great majority were extremely favourable about all aspects of its provision. A typical comment was, 'I don't think my children could go to a better school.' One parent spoke of her son's great enthusiasm by stating that, 'He runs to school!'

Excellent care, guidance and support, combined with a rich curriculum, promote very high standards in pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high standard. Their behaviour is exemplary because of clear expectations and consistent advice from staff. Racial harmony is strong. Pupils speak highly of the school's code of sanctions, saying that they understand why this exists, have their say in how it is drawn up, and that it motivates them to behave well. The care and support from staff ensure that pupils feel secure in school and are learning very well how to stay safe in the wider world. Pupils contribute to the community extremely well. They are instrumental in many of the changes that take place in the school, particularly through the activities of the school council. Attendance rates have risen well recently. However, in spite of enormous efforts on the school's part, a significant number of parents still take their children out of school for term-time holidays.

Outstanding teaching and learning result in excellent progress and achievement by pupils. This includes those who have learning difficulties and the most capable pupils. The youngest get an excellent start in Reception. By the time pupils take part in the national assessments in Year 2, they reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics; this has happened each year since the school's last inspection in 2002. Performance in Key Stage 2 is equally strong. Pupils build consistently well on their achievements in English, mathematics and science. Each year since the last inspection, the school's results in national tests at Year 6 have been above average and often exceptionally high. Indications from the current Year 6 group are that this trend continues. The school has a track record of exceptionally strong performance in reading and mathematics. Speaking and listening skills are also developed very well. Across the school as a whole, standards in writing are above average but, as is found nationally, are not quite as strong as pupils' skills in reading. The school has already started to narrow the gap between reading and writing to improve further this key skill. There are well-considered initiatives that are making writing more interesting and purposeful. There is also increasingly good provision to motivate boys to write more competently.

Teaching and learning are of outstanding quality because staff expect a great deal of pupils and provide very well-organised and interesting activities that are tailored to their individual

capabilities. Pupils are attentive, enthusiastic learners who work equally well independently and in groups. The very effective use by teachers of rigorous assessment and tracking systems ensures that pupils build on their knowledge and skills systematically through the school. Every available inch of the building is used for teaching. Space is at a premium and all avenues are being explored to provide even better accommodation and to enable the school to extend its provision further.

The curriculum is outstanding. It provides a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills, for which pupils in most age groups are taught in ability-based sets. This has borne fruit well in terms of pupils' achievements, but this is not a school that only focuses on basic academic skills. A visitor cannot fail to be impressed by pupils' other achievements on display throughout the school. For example, pupils show obvious pride in their high quality artwork and the numerous awards for sporting prowess. In addition to providing very well for all required subjects, there is a vast range of extra activities. Parents and pupils say how much they value these, from the early morning breakfast club and exercise classes, through sports coaching during the school day, to a multitude of after-school sessions. These contribute considerably to pupils' clear understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.

The school has built extremely well on its achievements since its last inspection and provides excellent value for money. The quality of the team of staff and governors shows an excellent capacity to continue to provide an outstanding quality of primary education for this community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

From standards that are below expected levels overall at the start of Reception, children make very rapid progress. By the end of the year, they often exceed the levels that are expected of five-year-olds in all areas of learning. Their personal and social development is particularly good. They form good relationships and are considerate of each other's needs. Staff in both classes work well together. There is highly effective use of both the indoor and outdoor areas. A good balance is struck between activities led by adults and those that children initiate or plan independently. Careful recording and tracking of progress ensure that children's individual needs are met very well. Parents are very positive about the provision for this age group and how well their children settle into school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the continuing success of the plans to narrow the gap between standards in writing and the very high standards achieved in reading.

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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	2

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

7 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Lee Chapel Primary School, Basildon SS16 5RU

I am writing to thank you for welcoming me to your school on my recent visit. It was good to meet so many of you and to talk to your school councillors. Mrs Jackson says that she trusts the school council to come up with some really sensible ideas - for example, without your help she would not have thought about building the new path in the playground.

A very large number of your parents wrote to tell me their views of the school. Please thank them for their help with the inspection. Almost all of them think that your school is great and I agree! Your parents say that you are very well cared for by the adults in school. You show the staff that you value this by behaving so well and by caring for other people in return.

You do really well with your work, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. I also saw lots of excellent artwork on display. You write well but, as you all know, the teachers are trying to make sure that your writing gets even better. They have plenty of good ideas for this. You can help by listening very carefully when the adults teach you new skills in writing and by using every opportunity to practise writing.

You and your parents told me how much you like all the extra clubs and visits the school provides. I saw a few of these in action and they looked like great fun. The enormous trophy cupboard full of sports awards shows how good you are at physical activities and sports.

Your school works so well because you have such an excellent headteacher. Mrs Jackson makes sure that you have extremely good teachers and interesting lessons. All the staff work as a big team and the governors help them with the plans to keep improving your school. Most important of all, they always want to do what is best for your education and to prepare you well for your future lives.

It was a great pleasure to visit your super school. Keep making the most of all it has to offer you.

Best wishes to you all

Mrs Helen Ranger

Inspector