

Lea CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 116892 |
| Local Authority | Herefordshire |
| Inspection number | 312437 |
| Inspection date | 12 March 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Hazel Callaghan |

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 category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 85 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kevin Ingram |
| Headteacher | Linda Townsend |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 March 2008 |
| School address | Lea Ross-on-Wye HR9 7JY |
| Telephone number | 01989 750296 |
| Fax number | 01989 750892 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lea Primary is a small school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. An above average proportion is eligible for free school meals and there is a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A larger number of pupils than usual join or leave the school throughout the year in all classes. A few of the children return to Lea Primary several times before going on to secondary education. The number of pupils in each year group is small and attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year. Children have a wide range of abilities but overall standards when children start school are well below those expected. The headteacher has been in post since September 2006. Over the last two years, the school has successfully achieved the National Healthy Schools' Status, Sports Mark and Green Flag Status for Eco Schools.

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

Lea Primary is a good school with many strengths. It provides a good education for its pupils, which is enhanced by an excellent range of additional activities, clubs and visits. This exciting mix of activities engages pupils' interest and they enjoy coming to school. The staff also provide outstanding pastoral care for the wide range of pupils' individual needs. They ensure sensitive support is available to help pupils overcome personal difficulties and to settle to learning. Pupils consequently feel safe and secure. Many parents praised the high standards of care provided by staff. This comment is typical of many: 'Lea is a very happy school with a caring and supportive atmosphere.' Pupils follow the positive role models provided by staff and treat each other in the same way, showing care and consideration for each other's well-being and happiness. They work together well and collaborate successfully in their various roles, such as school councillors, members of the Eco committee or as young leaders. All play a very positive part in the life of the school and in contributing to the wider community.

Pupils' academic progress is also promoted well. Teaching is good. It is stronger in English than in mathematics and at its most effective in Reception and in the oldest class, but the overall impact on pupils' learning is good. Pupils achieve well over their time at the school. Standards fluctuate from year to year because of the small numbers and high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2007, standards in mathematics and English were in line with the national average and this demonstrates good achievement from a below average base. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made particularly good progress but the higher-attaining pupils also achieved well. Standards in science, however, dipped significantly last year. This was due primarily to changes in teaching and the smaller amount of time given to the subject. Pupils' standards were not monitored sufficiently accurately and their underachievement was not identified until it was too late. The school has learnt from this weakness and gone a long way to addressing the concerns. Systems for checking on pupils' standards and progress are now more comprehensive and provide a satisfactory range of information about their progress. The systems are not yet sufficiently robust, however, to ensure that possible underachievement is identified quickly and strategies to intervene are quickly employed so all pupils continue to achieve well.

The headteacher is recognised by governors, staff and parents as tireless in her efforts to provide the best chances for all the pupils. In this, she is strongly supported by all the staff who work together as a close-knit team. Some management procedures are still fairly new and the analysis of the school's strengths and weakness is a little cautious, but good progress has been made in extending and enriching the curriculum and in providing strong support for pupils' personal and pastoral care. The budget is used effectively and there is a large number of additional and experienced staff working alongside teachers. Together they provide skilled support for pupils of all abilities but strategies to enable pupils to recognise how well they are doing and to understand how to improve are still in their infancy and not yet consistently effective. The commitment of staff is clearly evident and the recent improvements are testimony to the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well because teaching is good and staff understand how these young children learn. Children settle into the Reception class

well because many have attended the nearby pre-school group and have had many opportunities to meet the staff and to visit the school before they start. Staff provide sensitive support and parents are very appreciative of the way children grow in confidence and love coming to school. Children achieve really well in all aspects of their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants monitor their progress well and ensure that new activities successfully extend their knowledge and understanding. Children's interests often lead the curriculum, and visits motivate children's curiosity and desire to learn. The outside area is used effectively to extend activities introduced within the classroom. The new area lacks development as yet but there are plans to ensure that it can be used more flexibly to promote children's good learning. Leadership of the Foundation Stage provision is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop consistent procedures to promote pupils' understanding of how well they are doing which enable them to recognise how they can improve their work.
- Develop systems for using data on pupils' standards and progress that enable early identification of possible underachievement so it can be quickly addressed.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards when children start in Reception are usually well below those expected, but the range of abilities is wide. Despite children's good progress in the Reception class, many children do not reach the standards expected when they transfer into Year 1. There is a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in each class and, by the end of Year 6, standards are often still below average. Good levels of teaching support have a very positive impact on the learning of all pupils, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and pupils achieve well. There has been a strong focus on developing pupils' speaking skills and this is having a positive impact. Standards and achievement in English continue to rise. Higher-attaining pupils also achieve well, especially in English and mathematics, and many of them pass their entrance examination into local grammar schools. The dip in science standards last year has been corrected and a strong focus on developing pupils' investigative skills is having a positive impact. Pupils who enter the school in Years 3 to 6 settle well and also make good progress but their attainment often depresses the school's standards further because their previous education is sometimes a little erratic.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and the atmosphere throughout is one of purposeful enjoyment. They have a strong sense of fairness and of right and wrong. The vast majority of pupils behave well. They say that they have no concerns about bullying and staff quickly manage any difficulties and arguments. During a discussion with pupils, one commented, 'Teachers are friendly but deal with naughtiness fairly.' Pupils have a good understanding of how to develop healthy and safe lifestyles. The school's close links with the church enable pupils to feel a sense of belonging to a wider community. In school, pupils respond well to taking responsibility and they feel proud to represent their school in competitions. Pupils work effectively together and are developing many workplace skills, such as independence and initiative. Basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average and so pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are very good relationships between adults and pupils, which result in pupils clearly enjoying their lessons and wanting to do well. Lessons are well planned and pupils say that many of their practical activities make learning fun. The objective of each lesson is clearly explained and teachers are often skilled at introducing new ideas or skills. Many teachers review what has been learnt and provide activities that build successfully on what has been already achieved. Some attention is given to pupils' evaluation of their own learning and progress and to the next steps in learning, but this is variable. Teachers' marking, at its best, gives clear indications of how well pupils are progressing and what needs to be done to improve, but this also is inconsistent. The large number of extremely skilled teaching assistants play an important part in pupils' learning. They work well with teachers to support pupils of different abilities, using a variety of successful strategies to stimulate good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal and health development. It is underpinned by the new 'Values Education', which helps pupils to reflect on their actions and that of others. The curriculum has many strengths which have been recognised by national awards in the arts, for sport, in the promotion of pupils' healthy lifestyles and support for the environment. These initiatives all strengthen a curriculum that is made relevant to pupils and is well adapted to meet the pupils' needs, especially of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An extensive range of additional opportunities enriches the curriculum. There is a good range of school clubs in sport and other areas of interest. Good use is made of outside agencies, local artists, other visitors and links with other schools and colleges to extend pupils' experiences. The school recognises that the curriculum could be further strengthened by focusing more on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills within other subjects, such as the use of mathematics in science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are given exceptional pastoral care. The headteacher and all the staff, especially the learning mentor, take time to listen and talk to pupils about any concerns they may have. Support is also given to parents and families when there is a need, and external agencies are used very well. The school has worked successfully to improve attendance and behaviour. Safeguarding procedures, including child protection and health and safety requirements, are secure. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. A variety of strategies are used to support pupils' understanding of how well they are doing, but they are not all successful in supporting their understanding of what needs to be done to improve their work. A system of targets to identify pupils' next steps in the development of writing and speaking skills have been introduced but they are not always suited to the wide range of abilities in each class. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, however, is very good and pupils' individual targets are clear and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school and is supported by a well-informed and active governing body. Now the new school building is up and running smoothly, they have correctly turned their attention to other aspects of their roles and responsibilities. A positive evaluation of the ways in which the governing body works has given them a new sense of direction and they participate well in monitoring the work of the school and in future planning. The senior leadership team is fairly new and is still developing its ability to effectively evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses, but the many strengths identified in the last inspection report have been effectively maintained and some aspects strengthened. There is a clear focus on continuing to make Lea a very successful school to which all staff contribute.

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Annex A

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 |
| 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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| 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

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lea C of E Primary, Ross-on-Wye HR9 7JY

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You are correct in thinking that you go to a good school. Here is a little of what we found out.

- You make good progress and many of you reach standards that are similar to those of most pupils nationally. You do well English and those of you who have difficulties in reading and writing often make really good progress.
- Your behaviour is good. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You understand how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy.
- You clearly enjoy your lessons. You work hard and try to do your best.
- You are taught well. Your teachers work hard to make sure that you get work that is interesting and will help you to learn well.
- The headteacher and staff work together as a strong team and look after you extremely well so you are safe and happy.
- There are many super activities for you to try; lots of clubs, visits and visitors to school that making learning fun and interesting.
- You have plenty of opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the community, to work with others and to help people around the world.

Even though Lea is a good school, there are some things it can do better. I have particularly asked the headteacher and governors to:

- help you understand how well you are doing in your work and what it is you need to do better
- check on your progress more regularly, so that they can quickly spot if you are having difficulties.

Remember you can always help things along by continuing to try hard and be kind to one another. Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Callaghan Lead inspector



13 March 2008

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Mrs Callaghan
Lead inspector