

Leigh Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118278
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312865
Inspection date	13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Massingham
Headteacher	Wendy Wallace-Holman
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	The Green Leigh Tonbridge TN11 8QP
Telephone number	01732 832660
Fax number	01732 832660

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school admits pupils mainly from the village of Leigh and the surrounding rural area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the number who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and one speaks English as an additional language. The number of pupils entering the school at other than the normal time is higher than in most schools. Most pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes because of the very small numbers. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that justifies its high reputation in the local community. The school has made rapid improvement since the last inspection through good leadership and management and is well set to improve still further. The headteacher leads the school well, with high expectations of what all members of the school can achieve. She has a clear view of how to raise standards, and the effectiveness of her initiatives can be seen by the improved national test results over the last few years. The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn quickly as a result. Teachers make learning interesting so that pupils listen carefully and show an eagerness to get on with their work.

Standards overall are above average and pupils' achievements are good. Children make a good start in Reception, where the provision is good, and most exceed the expected goals by the end of the year. Pupils continue to make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6, where standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Progress in writing is not as fast as in reading because not all teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in all subjects. The school recognises this and new initiatives to raise expectations of writing in Years 3 to 6 are starting to bear fruit. Subject leaders provide useful guidance to other staff, but they do not evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subject with sufficient rigour to raise standards even further.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well because that is what teachers expect of them. They show a great deal of respect for others and take responsibility readily. Attendance is good and pupils enjoy school. This is illustrated well by one parent who wrote, 'When I asked my daughter if she liked school she said, No! I love school' Pupils appreciate the well-planned curriculum that provides a good balance of academic work and activities to teach them how to live healthy lives and be a good member of the school and village communities. Pupils feel safe at school because of the good care, support and guidance provided. Parents value this aspect of the school's work highly and say how well all adults help their children when they are worried or upset.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in all subjects.
- Ensure that subject leaders monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility more rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards overall are above average and pupils achieve well. Children in the Reception class make a good start to school. They make particularly good progress in their reading, mathematical and creative skills. This good progress continues in the infant classes, and standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 6, pupils continue to achieve well and their standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Progress in reading is particularly rapid because pupils develop an enjoyment of books and are given many opportunities to read in all subjects. The school is maintaining the upward trend in the national tests results over recent years, except in writing, where progress is slower than in other aspects of English because pupils have fewer opportunities to hone their writing skills in subjects such as religious education and history. Pupils achieve well in music, art and design

and physical education. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, making particularly good progress in their reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' good personal development makes an important contribution to their academic progress. They enjoy school and work conscientiously to improve their skills. Attendance is good. Pupils said how much they valued teachers' help in lessons. They have a good understanding of the need to eat the right foods and take care of their bodies. They take part in physical activities with enthusiasm and are justifiably proud of their achievements in sporting events. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. During lessons and assemblies, pupils think deeply about issues such as poverty and sadness, and use their imagination effectively to write moving poems. For example, one pupil wrote,

'He is dreaming of a hot summer night
When trees dance in the misty breeze.
He is dreaming of stepping through the golden gates of Heaven'.

Pupils show a good sense of right and wrong. As a result, they behave well, bullying is rare and all feel safe at school. Pupils prepare themselves well for the future by grasping opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as members of the school and eco councils, caring for their environment (including meeting with the parish council to discuss local planning) and developing good literacy and numeracy skills. They enjoy good links with the local community, including the church and the history society, which gives them a good understanding of their place in society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching, from the Reception class to Year 6, explains why pupils learn so quickly. A significant strength in many lessons is teachers' high expectations of pupils' work. This motivates pupils and gives them a pride in their achievements. This was seen to good effect when Year 6 pupils discussed in great depth how to inform the public about a new web site. Teachers make lessons interesting by using exciting resources, including large computer whiteboards that pupils find fascinating. They give pupils plenty of opportunities to work independently, which they do well. This starts successfully in the Reception class, where children soon learn how to organise their work and select their next task. Throughout the school, the pace of lessons is usually brisk and pupils maintain their concentration throughout. However, sometimes teachers talk for too long and pupils get bored.

The assessment of pupils' progress and attainment is generally good, but not all teachers provide sufficient information when marking pupils' work to help them improve further. The very good partnership between teachers and skilled teaching assistants ensures that pupils of all abilities get the support they need to succeed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good, varied curriculum, which is strengthened by very productive links with other local schools and well-informed specialist teaching for music, dance, sports and

French. Pupils are quick to say how much they enjoy school because activities are interesting and include exciting first-hand experiences. There is a good emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills and encouraging a healthy lifestyle. In the Reception class, a lively, interesting curriculum places a strong emphasis on personal development. This gives children a good start to school and prepares them well for the future. Improvements since the last inspection in the planning in Years 1 and 2, notably by linking subjects together, have worked well and have had a particularly good impact on pupils' writing skills. The school recognises the need to do this in the older classes, where pupils rarely write enough in subjects other than English. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and organised well to ensure that they make good progress. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, book club, gardening and art club, does much to extend pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's very good emphasis on supporting pupils' personal development ensures that they learn to work well cooperatively, develop self-esteem and enjoy their learning. Safety and safeguarding procedures are rigorous so that pupils feel secure and happy. All adults know their pupils well and are always on hand to help settle any disputes that the 'Friendship Pals' on the playground cannot resolve. The school liaises closely with a wide range of specialists to ensure good care and support for pupils who have learning difficulties.

Pupils' academic progress is tracked effectively so that teachers know just when they need extra support. In a new initiative, all pupils are given targets for their writing and specific guidance about how they can improve their work. This is starting to have a good impact on the quality of their writing. Teachers' marking, however, is variable in the quality of guidance it provides. It ranges from detailed comments that pupils find very helpful to merely ticks that give no guidance at all.

The arrangements for admitting children into the Reception class are good and ensure that they settle into school quickly. Parents are very appreciative of the school's work and many wrote to inspectors to say how much their children felt safe and supported. One parent, whose child had recently moved from another school, commented, 'This school has turned around my child who used to object strongly to going at all. Now she loves school and works and plays hard'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management are the keys to the school's rapid improvement since the last inspection and mean that it is well set to do even better. The headteacher makes her vision for the school's future clear to all staff and has a sharp awareness of how to raise standards. Recent improvements in the teaching and learning of mathematics and science, for example, were the result of prompt action to rectify weaknesses in pupils' investigational skills. The headteacher has high expectations of what everyone can achieve but at the same time considers the workload of staff very carefully. This has helped create a very good team spirit where all members of the school are working well together. Self-evaluation systems are good and informed accurately by detailed analyses of pupils' standards and progress. A weakness in the leadership and management lies in the role of subject leaders, whose monitoring of standards

lacks the rigour necessary to raise standards even further. The school has developed very good partnerships with other schools that provide valuable expertise as well as useful sharing of ideas and facilities. Governance is good. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are not afraid to hold it to account.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

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	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

14 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Leigh Primary School, Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 8QP

As you know, two inspectors visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our two days with you and found you welcoming and friendly. You clearly like being part of a small village school, especially when using The Green to have your lunch. Those who were kind enough to speak to us told us a lot about your school. You feel this is a good school, and we agree with you!

What we found out about the school

- You make good progress, and standards are above average. However, standards in writing are not as high as in other subjects.
- Your reading is really good.
- Your teachers are doing a good job and make lessons interesting for you.
- Your behaviour is good and you are very kind to each other.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- You enjoy the exciting activities planned for you and many take full advantage of the many clubs after school.
- All the staff take good care of you and keep you safe.
- Your headteacher is a good leader and knows how to improve the school.

What we have asked the school to do now

- Help to improve your writing by giving you more practice in all subjects.
- Ensure that subject leaders provide more guidance to other teachers on how to raise standards further.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston Lead inspector