

Layton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119246
Local Authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	313229
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Hoban HMI

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	621
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Fisher
Headteacher	Ms Lynne Harrowell
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Lynwood Avenue Layton Blackpool Lancashire FY3 7DG
Telephone number	01253 392179
Fax number	01253 394192

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI). HMI evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement; pupils' personal development and well-being; the quality of teaching and learning, and the effectiveness of managers in improving education and care for the pupils. This was done by gathering evidence from observing lessons, scrutinising school documentation and questionnaires completed by parents, and by talking with pupils, governors, staff, local authority officers and the headteacher.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but HMI found evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were justified.

Description of the school

Layton Primary School has significantly more pupils on roll than most primary schools. It serves an area of socio-economic disadvantage; and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average; and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is around the national average. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. A new headteacher began work at Layton in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Layton Primary is a good school; it offers pupils a good standard of care and education, thereby ensuring that its pupils are well placed to advance on to their next phase of education. It is a welcoming school where pupils feel happy, parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts, and staff work assiduously to improve outcomes for the children here. Children make good progress throughout the school and achieve standards in Key Stage 2 that are above the national averages. This represents, overall, good progress. The school is large, and the senior management team work vigorously to ensure that each child matters and counts as an individual. Pupils' personal development is good; also teaching and learning, overall, are good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage; they are strongest in Key Stage 2 where inspectors observed some outstanding practice. The leadership and management are focused on high standards of education and support for all Layton's pupils. Overall, the school provides a welcoming environment, where pupils thrive and make good progress in their education.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skill levels below those typical for their age, particularly in speech and in social skills. Children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning during that stage. Pupils make steady progress throughout Key Stage 1, reaching standards that are broadly in line with national averages, with boys doing as well as girls. Layton's results in Key Stage 2 have steadily improved over the last few years, and overall standards in 2007 were above national averages. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 2, as indicated by data and by inspectors' observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' written work. Pupils' achievement at the school is good overall; pupils meet suitably challenging targets and they make enthusiastic and constructive contributions to lessons. Pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties make the same level of progress as other pupil groups.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. This large school's efforts to project a welcome is reflected in how children in the Foundation Stage soon settle into the school's rhythms, in pupils' enjoyment of learning, and the positive views of parents about the school. Regular efforts to gauge views have resulted, for instance, in improvements to the playground and to a more personalised format for pupils' individual school reports. Pupils express interest in other cultures and religions, and are ready to engage in discussion with visitors about their time at Layton. One recent starter commented that she 'had found more friends here than in my old school'. Behaviour in lessons is good, although some pupils and parents expressed concerns about some boisterous behaviour during lunchtimes. Pupils are well aware of the high expectations of the school, and also who to approach if they have concerns. Although attendance is at the national average, the school is keen to improve it further, acting appropriately to limit significantly holidays taken in term time. Learners feel safe, and the school council acts as a useful conduit to inform the leadership of the school of pupils' concerns and suggestions. Pupils signalled their interest in healthy eating by pointing out the improvement in healthy options at lunchtimes and at the after-school club, and their preparedness to choose those options. Physical activity within and outside school time complements healthy eating. For instance, the number of participants entered for a forthcoming cross-country race is significantly higher than that of schools of a similar size. A range of extra-curricular activities means that pupils contribute to the wider community, and learn of those less fortunate in society, for instance through work on a local homelessness project, through Red Nose Day and with Barnados.

Teaching and learning are good, and are strongest at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, where there are elements of outstanding practice. The atmosphere in classrooms usually reflects pupils' and teachers' commitment to learning; typically, pupils are well behaved and enthusiastic, and keenly involved in tasks. The best teaching is typified by effective lesson planning; clear objectives shared with pupils; humour; pace; and work well suited to pupils' ability. In one outstanding lesson, the teacher and pupils explored together how goals could be achieved by effectively overcoming obstacles, using practical and theoretical illustrations, ranging from painting the spare room to nuclear physics. The weaker lessons offer fewer opportunities for pupils to use their initiative, and lack the verve and creativity of the very best. The school is working to improve teaching and learning through sharing best practice. Teaching assistants now contribute to planning provision more effectively for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, resulting in improvements in this group's learning.

The curriculum meets national requirements, and is broad and balanced with effective differentiation to meet the needs of learners. For instance, the curriculum planning for core subjects relates to pupils' interests and subject knowledge, which has led, for instance, to improvements in boys' writing in Key Stage 1. Music has been used effectively to support pupils' personal development through performing and evaluating each others' work, thereby improving analytical skills and speaking and listening. The school's size enables Layton to offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including gardening, chess and football for both boys and girls. Well established work, such as the school's choir singing at local events, with Neighbourhood Watch and on road safety, involves pupils effectively with the local community.

Child protection and risk assessments procedures are in place. The school has worked hard to develop induction processes to ensure that parents and children enjoy the transition from home to Reception. At Year 6, transition procedures effectively support older pupils as they prepare for secondary school. The effective use of assessment enables managers and teachers to offer effective support to improve care and education. Pupils speak confidently about their targets, their own progress and what they can do to improve. This is supported by marking that enables pupils and teachers to measure progress accurately, and offers clear guidance for improvement. Support for vulnerable pupils demonstrates that interventions and links with other agencies are in place.

Leadership and management are good overall in the school. The new headteacher offers strong leadership, and a clarity of vision that encapsulates higher levels of education and care for all at Layton. In this she has the support of staff and managers. Monitoring and self-evaluation are well-established and have clearly determined priorities for improvement; for instance, the need to close the gap between literacy and numeracy throughout the school. That analysis, in turn, has led to effective re-organisation of teaching assistants, to ensure continuity of support for learners. Middle leaders know their subject areas and responsibilities well, and contribute to the school's improvement through informal discussions with colleagues and peer observations. Staff consider that performance management is contributing to their own, and the school's, improvement. The governing body is knowledgeable, and holds the school to account, acting as a critical friend. The school provides good value for money, has addressed the recommendations of the last report and has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's pre-school experiences are gained in a variety of local settings. The school's assessment of children on entry signals that children start with skills below those typical for

their age, particularly in language and social skills. Good procedures for induction, including home visits, build good early relationships with children and parents. The school's data and inspectors' observations show that children make satisfactory progress, and are well placed to enjoy and achieve in Key Stage 1. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with a vision of high quality care and an improved environment for children in this phase. However, opportunities for staff to observe the work of their peers are limited, and areas for improvement in teaching and learning are not clearly identified. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. When teaching is good, children settle quickly into the routine, there is a buzz of industry, space and resources are used effectively, and there is a focus on improving basic skills, partly through engaging children's interest in imaginative activities. Where teaching is weaker, space is not well used and opportunities for learning are missed. Assessment of children is in place, but it is not always used to inform the next steps in learning. This results in less rapid progress being made by children. The environment limits opportunities for learning and support, and the school is working with the local authority to improve conditions further in this phase. Liaison work between parents and with the rest of the school ensures that children make an effective and smooth transition into Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and during the earlier part of Key Stage 1.
- Improve assessment within the Foundation Stage to inform the next steps in children's learning.
- Improve arrangements for pupils' movements around the school at lunchtimes.

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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
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3
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	3
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	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	3
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

30 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Layton Primary School, Blackpool, FY3 7DG

You will remember that I and another colleague visited your school to find out how well the school is supporting you and educating you. I am writing to you to tell you what I found. First of all, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and my colleague; we really appreciated that, and the time that some of you have spent with us to tell us about your experience at school.

Let me tell you some of the aspects of the school that we thought were good. For example:

- pupils at Layton reach standards above national averages in their SATs at the end of Year 6, and your school's results have been improving over some years;
- your teachers and other staff work very hard and effectively to support your learning and your care;
- you are enthusiastic and well behaved in lessons;
- the headteacher and the senior staff are leading the school well; and
- teaching and learning are good in the Juniors and in Year 2.

In terms of improving things still further, we think that:

- teaching and learning can be better in the Foundation Stage and during the earlier part of Key Stage 1;
- teachers' knowledge of how to assess your progress within the Foundation Stage could be strengthened; and
- arrangements for moving around the school at lunchtimes could be improved.

Much of this falls to your teachers and other staff to do. However, I hope you can help by thinking about the school's strengths and areas that can be improved, and using your class's suggestions box to pass on any thoughts that might help Layton Primary do even better in the future.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Best wishes

Mike Hoban

Her Majesty's Inspector