

Lever House Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119305
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313250
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Jennie Platt

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	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Rainton
Headteacher	Mr John Hurst
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2005
School address	Bristol Avenue Farington Leyland Lancashire PR25 4YR
Telephone number	01772 424268
Fax number	01772 456912

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues were investigated: progress in the Foundation Stage, achievement in Key Stage 1 especially of higher attaining pupils in reading, current progress in Key 2 especially in mathematics and writing and the overall monitoring and evaluation of the school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation document, national published assessment data, the school's monitoring records, school development plan, parents' questionnaires and discussions with governors, staff and pupils. Several lessons were observed. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspection 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 the report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school and pupils are taught in 8 classes. Reception and Year 1 pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The school serves an area with some social and economical advantage. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. A low proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a very small number need support because English is not their first spoken language. A lower than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

One parent sums the school up as, 'A friendly, sociable school where everyone knows each other. It sets an excellent pattern for life.' This is certainly the case in this good school which has several outstanding features. These include pupils' personal development and the way the school cares for and guides its pupils. As a result, this is a welcoming school that enables pupils to feel safe and able to take full advantage of all of the richness that is on offer to them. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and love school. This is reflected in excellent attendance.

The exceptional vision of the headteacher, which is shared by all staff, is at the heart of the school's drive to raise standards. As a result, pupils achieve well and all make good progress. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Science is a real strength in the school with a pattern of significantly above average results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The focus on practical activities matches the interests of the pupils and enables them to make rapid gains in their scientific skills and knowledge. Reading is stronger than writing which although average could be higher especially for the more able pupils. A more exciting approach to teaching letters and sounds and basic writing skills is raising standards in Key Stage 1. Although older pupils write imaginatively, their punctuation is not consistently accurate and handwriting is not always joined up and neat. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because the school is quick to identify their needs, seek guidance and implement effective support. Pupils with a statement of special educational need often make excellent progress because of the well informed support they receive. When required, individual help is available often using computers to capture pupils' interest and give them that extra boost to their learning.

Two factors contributing to the pupils' good achievement are the good quality of teaching and the stimulating curriculum. From the moment they start in the morning pupils are kept busy and are motivated to learn. Lessons are well organised and run smoothly. The best lessons have pace and include a variety of activities that challenge and excite pupils. Numeracy lessons are very practical and challenging. This is less evident in some literacy lessons which do not always move fast enough and expectations of written work are not always high enough. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a real strength and is used well by teachers and pupils. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson pupils used video to record their drama adding greatly to the excitement of the lesson. Outstanding relationships between staff and pupils lead to mutual respect. In lessons this translates into excellent behaviour and a willingness to rise to teachers' challenge. Teachers write comments in pupils' books to inform them about how to improve their work. In the best lessons, teachers make the focus of the lesson very clear to pupils. One teacher started her lesson by telling the pupils, 'By the end of the lesson you will know how to write a setting for a story.' The conclusion of the lesson assessed achievement and informed future work. This involvement of pupils in their learning is developing in other classes.

The well balanced curriculum leads to a good variety of activities. Many clubs and visitors not only enrich the curriculum but also extend pupils' skills especially about how to keep fit and healthy. Teaching successfully focuses on the importance of caring not only for themselves but also for the environment. This is evident in the school's National Healthy School Status Award and Eco status. The school councillors represent well the opinions of their peers and

have contributed to several improvements. Pupils learn about how to help other children who are less fortunate than themselves. Links with a school in Ghana have extended their understanding of how their actions can help others. Focus on independent learning is good because the school taps effectively into ICT for research and mass media presentations. The school provides some innovative activities to prepare pupils for the future. For example, Year 6 pupils plan and carry out an annual Charity Week which involves learning the skills of communication and negotiation with adults as well as financial accountability. This greatly enhances their self-confidence and coupled with high academic standards prepares pupils extremely well for the future.

The programme for personal and social development is both detailed and varied. It contributes effectively to pupils maturing into caring young adults well informed about how to care for themselves and others. One pupil expressed this well as 'what is good about this school is no-one has secrets and we share any concerns'. All involved with the school have the pupils' welfare at the heart of their decisions. Response is prompt if a need arises as in providing bereavement counselling and welcoming new pupils who speak no English.

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is accurate and extremely honest, and the school has an exceptionally clear understanding about priorities to further raise standards. These are translated into action via a well organised school development plan. The school has a rolling programme of extending the monitoring and evaluation skills of subject leaders. This has led to detailed action plans for literacy, numeracy, ICT and early years that translate into positive action to raise standards. Other subjects will receive this attention as the plan progresses. Governance is good. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The improvement in monitoring pupils' performance is enabling the school to set challenging targets and the school is well placed to achieve these. The staff are gelling into a strong team and with the effective leadership of the headteacher, the school's capacity to improve is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with standards that are generally typical of their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning, so that by the time they leave the Reception class most are reaching the level expected for their age and an increasing number are working beyond this level. Standards in reading and writing are improving with a new approach to teaching letters and sounds. Teaching and learning are good and staff clearly understand the needs of these young children. A good balance of tasks led by teachers and free choice enables children to grow in independence. The curriculum is imaginative and varied with a focus on practical activities. Although the outdoors is used well, as in practical numeracy activities, the lack of space makes it difficult to fully extend learning to the outside. The Foundation Stage is well managed ensuring that practice keeps ahead of nationally recommended changes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in writing especially for the higher attaining pupils.
- Ensure that the outside learning environment in the Foundation Stage is as stimulating as the children's indoor areas.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	1
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	1

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?	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?	2
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	2
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	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

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lever House Primary School, Lancashire, PR25 4YR

Thank you for the wonderful time I had when I visited your school. I appreciated your friendship and the way you told me about your school. You go to a good school that has some excellent features. These include your personal development. Your behaviour is excellent and you really work hard. Lever House is a very caring school and I am glad you feel safe and happy.

Teaching in your school is good and this enables you to make good progress. I was especially impressed with some of your work in information and communication technology. Standards are usually good, particularly in science. Most of you write imaginative stories and poems but you do not always remember to use punctuation correctly and your handwriting is not as neat as it could be. Some changes have already been made and I have asked the school to further improve your skills in writing. The children in the Reception classes enjoy learning in the fresh air and I have asked the school to make the outdoor space larger and more imaginative.

I trust you will continue to enjoy your time at school and I am sure you will help your teachers by working well and doing your best work.

Best wishes

Jennie Platt

Lead inspector