

# Leasowes Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131568
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315831
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Field

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	428
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeff Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fergus Rule
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Porlock Avenue Weeping Cross Stafford ST17 0HT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 356365
<b>Fax number</b>	01785 356365

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 November 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	315831

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large school opened in September 2006, following the amalgamation of adjoining infant and junior schools. Most of the pupils who attend the school live locally and are from a White British background. Far fewer pupils than seen nationally are entitled to free school meals. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Leasowes Primary School is a good school that parents rightly recognise strives hard to give their children a rounded education. Children receive a good start in the Foundation Stage which is built on successfully in subsequent years. The curriculum is rich and exciting and fosters in pupils a love of learning. Pupils' personal development is good, with key strengths in behaviour, the positive contribution made to the community and appreciation of cultural diversity. Relationships are exemplary. Pupils are very proud of the school and highlight amongst its many qualities the happy atmosphere and friendly staff who make sure they are well cared for. Excellent links with local schools, businesses, the community and schools abroad make a significant contribution to deepening pupils' knowledge of the wider world and prepares them well for their future working lives.

Strong and well-focused leadership by the headteacher has kept the school moving forward following the amalgamation a year ago. Accurate self-evaluation ensures that strengths and weaknesses are identified. The very positive impact of the school's strategies to improve standards in mathematics have resulted in rising standards. However, the school recognises that more work is necessary to raise standards further in writing. Pupils say the headteacher makes sure that everyone has an equal chance to do well and this is one of the reasons why they enjoy coming to school. Good teaching helps the pupils make good progress and reach above average standards. Occasionally progress slackens when work is too easy for the more able learners. Additionally, marking does not always help pupils to develop skills to look critically at their own work and make improvements as a result. The leadership team is doing a good job in managing change positively. The next step is for them to have more time to fulfil their specific leadership responsibilities and to extend their monitoring roles.

Pastoral care is good and helps pupils learn how to be safe and healthy and to take responsibility for themselves and others. The school effectively makes sure that pupils who find learning more difficult are given work from personalised programmes that support their good progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory, with some good use of pupil targets to support learning in literacy and numeracy. However, the good practice used to track closely individual progress in mathematics has yet to be used rigorously to support improvements in literacy.

Governors are supportive of the school. They make sure that school improvement processes and performance management systems are closely tied in to raising achievement. Each governor has a subject or major aspect link that helps them make informed checks on the school's effectiveness. The school has made a good start to its life as a primary school and has good capacity to continue to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is good. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is generally at the level expected for their age. Good teaching of basic skills provides children with a strong foundation for the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Induction arrangements are good and help children to separate from parents/carers without trauma and settle very quickly to routines. Parents are kept fully informed and involved in their children's learning through good quality information and resources, such as the picture/sound books, and the rota of caring for the class pet, 'Little Hoot'.

Achievement is good with most children reaching, and some exceeding, the levels expected for their age by the time they transfer to Year 1. Teachers, nursery nurses, and teaching assistants are skilled practitioners and work successfully together to provide good care and ensure that children's personal development is promoted well. This ensures that children have very good attitudes to learning and are confident to 'have a go' at new challenges. The curriculum is planned effectively and includes a good balance between adult-directed and child-selected learning. Physical development is well provided for, but the limited access to the outdoor area curbs children's opportunities for free, spontaneous movement and creative play. The school has recognised this and has plans to develop the outdoor space as a key priority. Although Nursery and Reception classes are some distance apart, effective leadership and management ensure good liaison. However, the Foundation Stage leader who teaches in Reception has only limited opportunities to monitor the work in the Nursery.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Push on with implementing the action planned for raising achievement in writing and make regular checks to ensure that the strategies for improvement are having the required impact.
- Sharpen the tracking of pupils' progress, particularly in literacy, and make sure that marking helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve and supports their self-review.
- Give time to senior leaders to develop specific leadership responsibilities and extend their monitoring and evaluation roles.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From an average starting point in Nursery, pupils achieve well to reach above average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. A high proportion of Year 2 pupils attained the higher Level 3 in both reading and writing in the 2007 assessments. Year 6 pupils' performance in the national tests in 2007 was above that seen nationally in all subjects. Year 6 pupils attained significantly better results in mathematics than in English and science. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was above average in all subjects, and significantly so in English and science. All pupils achieve particularly well in reading, with a very good home-school partnership supporting this. Pupils' achievement has improved in mathematics because of the well-led action plan. The school rightly identifies the need to draw on this success to support further improvement in writing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. This is reflected in their good attendance and exemplary behaviour. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils' cultural development is outstanding as a result of a broad and lively curriculum enriched by very well forged international links and a vast range of creative, artistic and musical experiences. Pupils are resourceful and self-reliant. Their relationships with one another are excellent. They show good enquiry skills, initiative and perseverance when given the opportunity but in some lessons, the style of teaching restricts these skills from being developed. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, for example when they are part of the school's 'walking bus', and most adopt healthy lifestyles through regular swimming and break activities such as 'Huff and Puff'. The contribution pupils make to the running of the school through their many committees and the school council is outstanding. By the time they are ready to move on to

the next stage of education, pupils are sufficiently mature to face the many changes this entails. The development of good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills further enhances their ability to meet new challenges and opportunities with confidence.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers deliver interesting and exciting lessons that ensure pupils' sustained application and enjoyment. Occasionally, over-directed activities limit the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, and this inhibits their initiative. At its best, marking helps learners to improve their work but it is sometimes excessively positive and this limits pupils' accurate self-review.

Teachers chart pupils' progress effectively to ensure that tasks are well matched to the needs of different groups. They do this more successfully in mathematics than in English. Effective setting arrangements in mathematics give lessons pace and make them challenging, especially for the more able learners. Pupils who are gifted mathematicians learn exceptionally well when withdrawn from class for small group work. Pupils with learning difficulties make consistently good progress because they benefit from effective tailor-made programmes that help them meet personal targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum has a strong focus on basic skills and meets the needs and expectations of the pupils. The good quality provision in ICT supports pupils' successful learning in all subjects. Senior leaders' recent evaluation of the curriculum highlights its breadth, balance and strong linkages. However, curriculum planning, though satisfactory, does not always show precisely what gains different groups of pupils are expected to make in lessons, and this restricts the opportunities for assessing progress and checking the impact of work to support them.

The school is strongly committed to inclusion, and good provision ensures that pupils with learning difficulties do well. In contrast, the provision made for pupils with gifts and talents is ad hoc, although there are strengths in mathematics, arts, music and sports that enable this group of learners to achieve well in these subjects.

Very good curricular enrichment is provided through a very wide range of experiences that pupils say they greatly enjoy. The school's international work with the Comenius project, local schools and community groups is very successful in supporting pupils' future life choices and their preparation for the world of work.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Well-established routines, high expectations of behaviour and social skills, together with excellent relationships, ensure pupils feel happy, comfortable in school, and able to seek help when they have a worry. For example, Year 2 pupils oversee a 'friendship bench' and give support to those who need it. An agreed whole-school tracking system is in place and is used

effectively to chart progress and make sure that future learning tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities in numeracy, but this is not consistently the case in literacy sessions.

Child protection arrangements and staff vetting procedures are effective and meet current government legislation. Although staff are attentive and vigilant in caring for pupils both in and out of school, the checking and recording of potential risks before educational trips lacks rigour.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership has provided a clear direction and effectively brought the schools together after a more difficult amalgamation than was anticipated. Members of staff and governors work well as a team and they share the headteacher's commitment to ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they can. A collegiate approach is being taken to building curriculum teams and to ensure the school promotes Every Child Matters outcomes. The leadership team are united and, following a shared audit of the school, are now ready to extend their monitoring and evaluation role. They recognise that their next step is to develop specific leadership responsibilities as set out in the school improvement plan and to facilitate the sharing of best practice through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. The school sets challenging targets to support the raising of standards in Year 6 but there is scope for more effective use of targets in other years. The school fosters very good links with its community, outside agencies and other schools to the benefit of pupils' education.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 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	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?	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leasowes Primary School, Stafford, ST17 0HT

Thank you very much for being such good ambassadors for your school when my inspectors and I came to see you earlier this week. We enjoyed meeting and chatting with so many of you and hearing why you are so proud of your school. You told us it is a happy and friendly place and, all in all, simply a good place to be. You are right!!

Here are some of the things we found out that we would like to share.

- You enjoy coming to school because teachers make your lessons interesting and you work hard to achieve as much as you can.
- You are making good progress in your work, particularly in mathematics.
- From Nursery to Year 6, your behaviour is first rate and you get on with one another outstandingly well; the contribution you make to your school is excellent.
- You are well looked after by caring staff who do their best to respond to any worries you have and this makes you feel safe.
- The work you do with the local community and the international links you have with schools, helps you to prepare very successfully for the future world of work.
- The headteacher makes sure your school provides you with a good education; he is helped in this by the senior team, staff and governors and I know that you appreciate this because you told me so!

We have identified three things that the school could improve to make things even better.

- Help you get better at writing and make sure that any new plans are tested out to see that they are working.
- Find out at regular intervals how well you are doing in literacy and make sure that marking helps you to understand how to improve your work and see how well you are doing.
- Give time to the senior team to visit you in lessons to see how you are progressing and to make sure that they highlight the very best of what's going on so that it can be shared in every class.

We wish you the very best of luck for the future

With kind regards Christine Field Lead inspector

**Annex B**

9 November 2007

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Leasowes Primary School, Stafford, ST17 0HT**

Thank you very much for being such good ambassadors for your school when my inspectors and I came to see you earlier this week. We enjoyed meeting and chatting with so many of you and hearing why you are so proud of your school. You told us it is a happy and friendly place and, all in all, simply a good place to be. You are right!!

Here are some of the things we found out that we would like to share.

- You enjoy coming to school because teachers make your lessons interesting and you work hard to achieve as much as you can.
- You are making good progress in your work, particularly in mathematics.
- From Nursery to Year 6, your behaviour is first rate and you get on with one another outstandingly well; the contribution you make to your school is excellent.
- You are well looked after by caring staff who do their best to respond to any worries you have and this makes you feel safe.
- The work you do with the local community and the international links you have with schools, helps you to prepare very successfully for the future world of work.
- The headteacher makes sure your school provides you with a good education; he is helped in this by the senior team, staff and governors and I know that you appreciate this because you told me so!

We have identified three things that the school could improve to make things even better.

- Help you get better at writing and make sure that any new plans are tested out to see that they are working.
- Find out at regular intervals how well you are doing in literacy and make sure that marking helps you to understand how to improve your work and see how well you are doing.
- Give time to the senior team to visit you in lessons to see how you are progressing and to make sure that they highlight the very best of what's going on so that it can be shared in every class.

We wish you the very best of luck for the future

With kind regards  
Christine Field  
Lead inspector

