

The Leys Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101216
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	323424
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Daniel Kilborn

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	374
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Melanie Elmore
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Bartlam
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Leys Avenue Dagenham RM10 9YR
Telephone number	020 8270 6470
Fax number	020 8270 6471

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average and serves an increasingly diverse community. About a half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds mainly from Black British and Black African heritage. One third of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these need support with behavioural, emotional and social needs, and with speech, language and communication. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal times is well above average. The school provides Early Years Foundation Stage Provision. A Children's Centre has recently opened at the school and a daily breakfast club is available for pupils. The school has received the Healthy School status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the DCSF Activemark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving education. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory overall but shows more marked improvement over the past year. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school in all aspects of its work. One parent wrote, 'My child really loves school and he is making a really good improvement.'

Standards are below average but achievement is now satisfactory for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. Most children start school with very low attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They progress satisfactorily and, by the end of Year 2, while standards are still below average, they are now slowly improving. There is more work to do in raising standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 6 standards are below the national average in English, mathematics and science, but have improved well this year as the result of consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching and less change in the population of pupils. Attainment in science is better than in English and mathematics. The school has worked hard to improve standards in writing and this is beginning to have a positive impact. Senior leaders are aware that the same level of focus now needs to be centred on mathematics where pupils find difficulty in applying their knowledge in problem-solving situations and in recalling basic number facts quickly and accurately.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is improving as the result of carefully focused monitoring, and some good and outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. The appointment of new teachers after a period of some instability in the past is also leading to improvements in pupils' rate of progress. In the more successful lessons pupils are given clear instructions and good opportunities to discuss and improve their work. In the less successful lessons work is not always planned to match pupils' needs and guidance and marking do not inform pupils sufficiently as to how they can improve their work. Opportunities are sometimes missed to extend pupils' thinking and speaking skills.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils enjoy learning, have good attitudes and willingly accept responsibility. Behaviour is good and racial harmony high. Pupils care for and respect each other and relationships throughout the school are good. The many pupils new to the school say that they were made to feel welcome and soon made friends. The pastoral care of pupils is good and, although there are some good examples of academic guidance, it is inconsistent across the school. Pupils develop a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and know how to keep safe. There is a satisfactory curriculum with a wide range of enrichment activities including sport and the arts. The curriculum increasingly matches the needs and interest of the pupils, contributing to improving attitudes and standards.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has made a good start to her headship and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and the local authority. There is a clear commitment to improvement and high aspirations for the pupils. Subject leaders have been empowered to take more responsibility and governors receive good information enabling them to support and challenge the school's work. Good teamwork is established and staff morale is high. The school is aware that more needs to be done to raise achievement and standards further, improve the quality of teaching and embed new initiatives securely across the school. Self-evaluation is good. It is based securely upon a

good range of performance data that has helped to identify areas of underachievement and target support where it is most needed. This is beginning to improve achievement, standards and teaching. As a result, there is good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle well into the Nursery and Reception classes and make satisfactory gains in their learning, due to the sound quality of the provision. Standards on entry to the Nursery class are well below those expected for the children's ages. The indoor and outdoor learning environments provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for children to develop their independence. The school has identified the need to improve the outdoor learning environment area for the Reception children. Children are happy and confident in their surroundings and demonstrate trusting and positive relationships with staff and each other. Their welfare needs are fully met. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some good teaching was seen during the inspection. There is a fair balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Activities are generally well matched to children's needs with planned opportunities for them to develop speaking, listening and personal and social skills. Children's achievement is satisfactory although consistently better in personal, social, emotional and mathematical development, where the teaching is stronger. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory, as are the systems for checking children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion is good or better.
- Raise standards and achievement at Key Stage 1 in writing, reading and mathematics.
- Improve standards and achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 2.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement, including that of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils at the early stages of learning English, is satisfactory overall. The school is addressing, with some success, areas of underachievement and low standards over the last three years. High pupil mobility has had a detrimental impact on achievements and standards. It has presented continual and additional challenge for teachers and assessment systems. Current standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 but are improving as the result of better teaching arising from clear and focused monitoring. The school's tracking of pupils' progress and evidence from the inspection indicates that this improvement is likely to be maintained. Pupils are beginning to make more consistent progress as the impact of the more stable teaching begins to take effect. At Key Stage 2 pupils achieve less well in mathematics than in English and science. Their number knowledge and their ability to apply their basic skills in mathematics to investigative work are weaker aspects of their work. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and standards in the subject are broadly average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. A class assembly by Year 5 pupils was a good example of pupils reflecting on their behaviour and expressing their feelings through dance, drama and music. Relationships are strong throughout the school and behaviour is good. Pupils work well together in lessons and listen to and respect each other's point of view. The school council has a strong voice and its members talk with enthusiasm about the talent contest that was organised at their request. The pupil road safety committee runs competitions and the fund-raising committee organises events, raising money for charities as well as school funds. Pupils understand the need for healthy eating and comment positively on the new lunch menu, which provides lots of fruit and vegetables for them to enjoy. This good pupil awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle is reflected in the gaining of the Healthy School and Activemark Awards. The school has worked hard to improve attendance with a range of rewards and incentives and this is now satisfactory. Pupils develop satisfactory skills to prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and occasionally outstanding teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2. Where teaching is better, this is because it is well planned and resources are organised effectively. Lessons have a brisk pace and pupils play an active role in paired discussion and in good whole-class question and answer sessions. The good use of day-to-day assessment enables teachers to set tasks for pupils that are well matched to their abilities, enabling them to make good progress at an appropriate pace. Pupils in these lessons are aware of what they need to achieve and understand when they have been successful because the teacher makes sure their high expectations are clear. As one pupil said, 'Teachers give us constructive criticism; they may say things we don't like but it helps us for the better.' In less successful lessons assessments are not always used well to match tasks to abilities of pupils. Tasks are often either too easy or difficult so pupils become restless and disinterested. This slows down the progress made by pupils in these classes. Teaching assistants and the special needs coordinator provide good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English both in class and in small-group withdrawal sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills both in specific English and mathematics lessons and across other areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders have recognised that they need to further develop the curriculum to ensure it is more relevant, interesting and enjoyable for pupils. The school is currently seeking ways to extend links between subjects and draw more on the different cultures represented in the school. The emphasis on the development of personal skills throughout the school helps pupils to work independently. This is demonstrated by pupils' positive behaviour and good attitudes to learning. Pupils receive good access to ICT in the computer suite. A comprehensive programme of personal, health and social education contributes to pupils' good understanding

of healthy lifestyles. They benefit from specialist sports teaching during school times and understand the importance of exercise. Their enjoyment of learning is enriched through their participation in a range of clubs including football, dance, athletics and tennis. The curriculum is further enhanced by a range of visits to local festivals and events and to museums in London. The oldest pupils have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit to Wales. This helps to develop their social and teamwork skills through activities such as caving, canoeing and mountain walking.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral support is good, pupils feel safe and parents say they are cared for well. The school works well with outside agencies in order to support the most vulnerable pupils and their families. Links with the new Children's Centre and the school breakfast club offer good additional support to pupils. Those pupils with the most challenging behaviour are given every opportunity to improve and are only excluded if all other avenues have been exhausted. The role of the child protection coordinator is clearly focused on ensuring that safeguarding systems are robust. All staff receive the appropriate staff protection training which is updated regularly. Appropriate systems are in place to support groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils at the early stages of learning English and those new to the school. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the use of feedback and day-to-day assessment to ensure that pupils know the next steps in learning is inconsistent across the school. Pupils' overall progress is tracked effectively and a range of interventions and support are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The good leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher has provided the school with a clear direction following a period of staffing instability. The restructured and strengthened senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and where improvement is needed. As a result there is an appropriately focused school improvement plan. Subject coordinators have been empowered to develop their roles and are beginning to have an impact on improving achievement and standards. The school has managed to strengthen teaching by some strategic appointments and successful development of student teachers and other staff within the school. High pupil mobility has been tackled through an extension of pastoral support systems and a continuing focus on personal development, including behaviour management systems, and regular monitoring to improve teaching. Rigorous processes and focus have improved attendance. Governors support the school well and receive good information to assess the quality of its effectiveness. Community cohesion is satisfactory and the school is increasingly using the many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the pupils to extend understanding and awareness of a global dimension.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

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

03 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Leys Primary School, Dagenham, RM10 9YR

I am writing to thank you for the friendly welcome the inspectors received during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking with many of you and looking at your work. We think your school is improving and is providing you with a satisfactory education.

Your attitudes to work are good, you behave well and we were pleased to see how sensibly you all you get on together. Some of the many new pupils to the school told us they were made to feel welcome and how quickly they made friends. The school council shared with us their views about your school and we were impressed with their fund-raising efforts for charity and how many of you take responsibility as class and school monitors. We know some of you are training as playground mediators and we are sure this will be useful to other pupils and the school.

You try hard in your lessons and the teachers make many of these interesting, challenging and enjoyable. We have asked your headteacher to make sure all your lessons are like this. We really enjoyed the Year 5 assembly and hope the Year 6 production goes well. We were very pleased to see how many of you attend the good opportunities for out-of-school activities.

We think that the younger pupils could improve their work in reading, writing and mathematics. Older pupils have improved their writing and science work and we feel they need to improve their mathematics as well. We have asked the teachers to help them to achieve this.

Your teachers and visitors to school teach you about healthy eating and the importance of taking regular exercise. You say if you have any problems, an adult will always help you and that you feel safe in school.

We are sure that with your help your school will continue to improve and we wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Kilborn

Lead Inspector