

Leverton Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115279
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326170
Inspection date	27 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Cousins

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	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	213
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	Mr Adrian Platts
Headteacher	Mrs Isobel Barron
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Honey Lane Waltham Abbey Essex EN9 3BE
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Do boys in Reception and Nursery make good progress in reading and writing and is their achievement in language and personal, social and emotional development a real strength?
- How do leaders monitor the progress and attainment in Years 1 and 2, particularly of girls in mathematics and minority ethnic pupils?
- How well is the school using feedback and pupil targets to increase their rate of progress, especially in mathematics?
- How effectively is the school's leadership working to develop pupils' involvement in the national community?

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior teachers, subject leaders, staff, children, the chair of governors and from observations of teaching and learning. Other evidence considered included an analysis of pupils' work in exercise books and on display, school data on standards and progress and parents' questionnaires.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school in Waltham Abbey. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and includes pupils with moderate and complex learning difficulties, autism, social and emotional difficulties. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a quarter is from minority ethnic groups. A significant proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. A significant proportion of pupils join the school part way through the taught year. The school has Activemark and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Leverton Infant and Nursery is a good school. The pupils flourish from the start of their education in Nursery to Year 2. They settle quickly whether they join the school in Nursery, Reception or any other year group. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are integrated well into school life. This is because a good partnership is in place between the school staff, parents and other agencies. One parent summed it up by saying, 'I feel the school is always trying to improve and make Leverton a happy and safe environment.' The vast majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very happy with the progress their children are making and the care they receive in school.

Throughout the school pupils' personal development is good and a significant strength of the school. This is because all staff are highly committed to giving pupils a good level of care, guidance and support. Many pupils said they enjoyed 'looking after other children and the school'. Pupils learn to consider their own and others' feelings in this and other parts of the world well, because religious education sessions and special weeks are used effectively. For example, a multicultural week means pupils learn clearly about the European and Asian ways of life. Discussions and assemblies enable pupils to learn astutely how to keep themselves safe inside and outside school. Pupils understand well the dangers of fire and of not listening carefully to adults, because of the way staff teach them about personal safety. All pupils spoken to said they felt safe in school and that bullying is sorted out effectively because staff listen to them carefully. The school works rigorously to safeguard pupils and ensure that procedures meet requirements. The school council, called 'Jedi Knights', encourages all pupils to offer ideas about how to make the school even better and set a good example to others of how to behave maturely. Behaviour is good in lessons and at break times because staff manage pupils carefully. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their attendance is average as a result of thorough monitoring by the school.

Pupils' take great enjoyment in the extensive range of learning opportunities planned for them. A good, rich curriculum is in place. Pupils talked maturely about the many things that they like doing in school. They especially like writing and all types of mathematics. Displays around the school joyfully celebrate pupils' achievements. The school is refining its planning for gifted and talented pupils so that they have even more opportunities to develop their abilities. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education as a result of the sound literacy, numeracy and good social skills that they are taught in school. They enjoy working together in physical education lessons and particularly like the different dances they learn and gymnastics sessions. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles successfully because the school encourages them to eat sensibly and take regular exercise. For example, pupils were clear that crisps could only be brought into school on Fridays and most eat fruit or vegetables every day. Pupils' pastoral needs are cared for well. Pupils with complex needs receive good additional support. However, the unsuitable accommodation used for this purpose affects their concentration and sense of well-being detrimentally.

The school's leaders give a high priority to maintaining good achievement and standards. Their success with these priorities means that standards in the present Year 2 classes are average in reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics and science and have risen steadily over the last three years. The school set and met challenging targets in 2008, especially in English. Girls and boys achieve well from attainment on entry to the school that is below that typically expected nationally. The key to the school's success is its use of a detailed system to track

pupils' attainment and the extra support given to boys or girls who are underachieving. A considerable amount of work is done in small groups led by skilled teaching assistants. The system enables pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, especially those who join the school part way through the school year. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs are well supported and so make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve effectively because their progress is monitored carefully and regularly, in line with that of most pupils.

Good teaching is a major reason why pupils make effective progress in all aspects of their learning. Teachers challenge pupils successfully and explain complex ideas thoroughly. Pupils' basic skills develop well because teachers use good teaching methods. Strong features of teaching include the thorough use of practical activities. For example, Year 1 pupils learn to add two digit numbers because resources such as a number line are used effectively. Occasionally, criteria for what pupils are expected to attain are not displayed and utilized successfully. As a result, the end of the lesson is not always used well. For example, pupils are not regularly involved in evaluating their successes and areas for development at the end of sessions. Pupils' personal targets are set in literacy and mathematics and these are displayed suitably in classrooms. Assessment is used well and individual education plans for pupils who find learning difficult are rigorously created and utilized.

Good leadership and management have brought about improvements. A significant development since the last inspection is that pupils' standards have risen and are average in English and mathematics. Any barriers to learning are broken down thoughtfully and all pupils have equal opportunities to develop, due to inspiring leadership from the headteacher. Very reflective management by the headteacher and senior leadership team, ensures that the school's self-evaluation is rigorous. Occasionally, school leaders are not fully aware of what proportion of pupils has made the expected progress in each year group. Subject leaders manage their areas well and are keen to share aspects for further improvement. A good school improvement plan includes clear, challenging targets, designed to raise standards in all key areas of learning, including literacy, numeracy and science.

The school's leaders work imaginatively to unite society and so pupils contribute to the community well. For example, they ensure that the pupils raise money and understand the challenges met by various charities locally and nationally. The school supports different groups including the blind and Para Olympics. For example, children with profound and multiple disabilities are supported successfully because funds are raised so that a member of staff can attend and support their respite care. Pupils learn about how to care for trees and plants in the local area as a result of working with a woodland trust. They support successfully people in other countries where water is scarce. Governance is good and works thoughtfully to support pupils, parents, the school and local community. Governors gain good levels of knowledge and so they can challenge the school astutely. The sustained good quality of education and pupils' good achievement, indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Boys and girls make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Although standards are slightly below average by the start of Year 1, children make good progress from below expected levels of knowledge found nationally when they enter the school. They achieve particularly well in language and personal and social development. Children learn to use language to express their own careful thinking because the staff are very skilful in posing questions. The

children develop their basic skills well because staff assess them regularly. Assessments highlight what children can do and record effectively the next steps children could take to improve. Children's progress is beginning to be tracked in detail. Children learn to read using letter sounds successfully because of structured teaching and assessment. Planning for all areas of learning is shared with parents and staff because it is displayed thoughtfully on a classroom wall or through termly topic letters.

Children's personal development is good because staff ensure the welfare of each individual. For example, staff have successfully completed training in first aid for children in the early years. Induction arrangements for children are very good and so they settle quickly. They are confident to try new activities and experiment with resources. Children happily share equipment and work independently due to the thoughtful way that staff have organised the resources and the school day. The leadership of this stage of education is good. Consequently, the children have a wealth of opportunities to learn in the inside and outside areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that criteria for learning in lessons are clearly shared so that pupils can evaluate their successes more effectively.
- Improve the quality of the room where children who have complex needs are supported.

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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 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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

28 April 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Leverton Infant and Nursery School, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3BE

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a happy and friendly school. Good things about your school include:

- you make good progress in your work
- you concentrate and behave well in school
- you really enjoy all the things you do at school
- your headteacher and teachers have very good ideas about ways to improve the school
- teaching is good and the staff work hard to make sessions interesting
- a very good partnership is in place between the school, your parents and others
- staff care for you really well and listen to you thoughtfully.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. The most important matters are to:

- make sure that you know what you must learn in lessons and understand how well you are doing
- improve the room where children who find learning more difficult are helped and looked after.

Continue to listen carefully to staff comments, come to school everyday and enjoy all the super things you are learning at Leverton Infant and Nursery School.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector