

# Leverstock Green Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Controlled)

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117416
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326602
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nichola Perry

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.

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<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 (total)	272
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Simon Cutmore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Alan Phair
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Green Lane Leverstock Green Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 4SA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 406520

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2009
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**Fax number**

01442 406522

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Leverstock Green Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Controlled) is a larger than average primary school. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge which are broadly in line with those expected for their age, although this does vary significantly from year to year. The school offers care for children from age three upwards through its breakfast and after school clubs. A private nursery, inspected separately, operates alongside the school and offers a wide range of support for vulnerable families and their children.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. Numbers of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average, particularly in two year groups. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups are increasing. Numbers of pupils whose first language is not English are broadly average. Few are at the early stages of learning English.

The school is part of an Extended Schools network offering links with local secondary schools. The school's membership of the Primary School Sports Partnership has led to large numbers of pupils having access to a wide range of sports. The school has been awarded the Investors in People, Quality Mark and National Healthy School status.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Leverstock Green Primary School is a good school with particular strengths in the personal development of pupils and in the care and support it provides. The strong Christian ethos welcomes pupils from a range of backgrounds and faiths. It is a popular school, held in high regard by its pupils and their parents. There is a strong sense of the school community working together. Good relationships prevail at all levels and are a strength of the school. Inclusion of pupils with learning, or other difficulties, often very complex, is especially good.

Pupils' academic achievement is good overall. Standards in all subjects at the end of Year 2 are above average. By the end of Year 6 national test results show that overall standards are at least in line with national averages. This represents good progress when considering their average starting points. However, attainment at the end of Year 6 has been variable, particularly in English and science, indicating that the school has not always built on the good start it provides for pupils

Pupils are given many opportunities to become independent and communicate verbally. They know that their contributions are highly valued. As a result, they show high levels of confidence when talking in assembly, in lessons and when talking to adults. Pupils listen very well to each other and show genuine respect and care for others. They are unanimous in saying they love coming to school. This is reflected in parents' questionnaires and above average attendance. Behaviour is exemplary and well managed by teachers and pupils themselves. Pupils show excellent understanding of how to keep safe and lead a healthy lifestyles.

Although teaching and learning are good overall, they are not yet consistently good in Years 3 and 4, and expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always as high as they should be. Teachers make good use of assessment and systems which identify any underachievement. Pupils have targets to support their learning and these, along with improvements in teaching, have increased the rate of progress for all pupils. However, targets are not sufficiently challenging to ensure a faster rate of progress in learning year on year.

The curriculum is effective in meeting the needs of pupils. Basic skills are developed well across all subjects leading to better progress for all pupils. The strong focus on pastoral care ensures that pupils thrive in a warm and welcoming environment which supports learning well. Pupils receive good information about their progress in core subjects and their involvement in evaluating their own performance is having a positive effect on their learning. However, marking is not consistent across the school so that pupils are informed on a daily basis what they can do to improve their work.

Leadership and management are good and senior leaders work well with governors. They have a clear vision for the school's future and regularly evaluate provision through a well crafted school development plan. The school acknowledges the need for greater challenge and higher expectations for the senior pupils. The good improvement since the last inspection, along with improvements in teaching and the good progress now being made by pupils in Years 3 to 6, demonstrates the school is now well placed for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge broadly in line with those expected for their age, although attainment varies from year to year. Adults demonstrate a high commitment

to promoting children's safety and their personal, social and emotional development. As a consequence, children leave the nursery class with exceptionally good attitudes to learning and the ability to sustain interest in tasks for reasonable periods of time. In the Reception class they develop well in all areas of learning and make good progress. Independence is promoted outstandingly well through child-initiated play activities. There is a high expectation that children will try to do things for themselves and good opportunities exist for them to adapt activities and find things out for themselves. For instance, the nursery teacher provided a 'rope' for a child who wanted to 'climb up to the castle' like Jack in the Beanstalk story. The leadership has good understanding of child development and effectively encourages staff to focus on a good quality and continuous curriculum. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and those that children choose themselves, with many opportunities for them to explain to the rest of the class what they have been doing. Assessment of children's skills and knowledge is constant and records are good. Activities are adapted to meet individual needs and extra support provided where necessary. There is excellent communication with parents and carers who are kept very well informed of their child's welfare and progress.

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

- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching across Years 3 to 6 and monitor this rigorously.
- Raise expectations of what older pupils can achieve by ensuring that targets set are more challenging and progress towards them is monitored regularly.
- Ensure that marking informs pupils about what to do next in order to raise the standard of their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The good start pupils have in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built on effectively in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2 and attainment is above that nationally expected in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence and school assessments indicate a similar picture at the end of the current academic year.

Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been broadly in line with that expected nationally for several years, with evidence of a steady upward trend over time. The school is successfully accelerating the rate of progress in Years 3 to 6 which is now good. Inspection evidence and school data show pupils in the current Years 3 to 6 are making better progress from their starting points than in previous years, due to improved teaching and higher expectations of what they can learn. Actions taken to close the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is making a clear difference, particularly in writing across the school. Pupils who are learning English as a second language and those who need more support with their learning achieve well against their individual targets and make similar progress to others.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Good attendance, excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning reflect pupils' enjoyment of school. They know how to stay safe and say that bullying is rare. Pupils show considerable knowledge about how to lead healthy lifestyles, demonstrated by healthy lunchboxes and snacks. They exercise vigorously, appreciating the many sports activities on offer. The school council takes its role seriously and is involved in the planning of playground equipment and

organisation of competitions. Pupils say their views are listened to and acted upon. They particularly value the introduction of Worry Boxes in Years 3 to 6 and feel able to approach an adult in school with their concerns. Pupils have a good range of responsibilities, including the support of Reception children by older pupils. Good progress is made in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies, lessons, visits and visitors, although pupils show less understanding of the lives of others in the wider world. Older pupils regularly organise fund-raising for charities. They develop good workplace skills by working together cooperatively, and through work with local businesses on enterprise and sustainability projects. Achievement in basic skills is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning overall are now good. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is consistently effective. However, in Years 3 and 4 the quality is not yet consistently good so that teachers in Years 5 and 6 are still left with too much to do. Systematic monitoring of teaching and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve is leading to a more consistent standard of teaching. Teachers increasingly use a wide range of learning styles so that pupils' needs and interests are effectively incorporated into learning. Lesson planning is good with a focus on learning and clear objectives for different groups and ages of pupils. Ongoing feedback to pupils during lessons is good and contributes strongly to their great enjoyment of learning and understanding of how well they are performing. Good practice is emerging which encourages pupils to assess their own work and consider how it can be improved. Behaviour in classes is excellent due to high expectations from teachers. Many pupils demonstrate mature attitudes to learning, increasingly taking responsibility for their own actions. This is especially noticeable when they are actively engaged in learning and given choices about how to present their findings. This aspect of their learning has been particularly motivating for boys and is leading to improved achievement.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy in the curriculum. Initiatives to improve writing and to increase opportunities for extended writing across other subjects have been successful. A good programme of linking sounds and letters has resulted in better standards of reading and spelling in younger classes. Guided reading activities are now more focused on 'next steps for learning'. The curriculum is enriched well with many visitors and visits, which give meaning and purpose to learning. Pupils enjoy learning French and themed weeks where learning focuses on more practical activities or particular topics. These projects provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. A good range of well-attended clubs enables pupils to develop their interests and abilities.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Outstanding levels of pastoral care and support, together with a strong emphasis on welfare and safety, contribute to pupils' enjoyment and good personal development and well-being.

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent so that pupils feel valued. Robust systems to safeguard pupils' health and safety, including risk assessments and safeguarding procedures, are fully in place. The school works well with parents and other agencies. Specialist staff from local schools are well deployed, providing advice about care for disabled pupils and delivering challenging mathematics lessons to groups of older pupils. Academic guidance is good overall. Praise is used well so that pupils feel successful about their achievements. Progress is carefully monitored so that pupils at risk of underachieving are identified early and effective arrangements put in place to support them. Most teachers have high expectations and set challenging targets for learning. There is some good marking of pupils' work but too frequently this does little to help pupils know how to go about improving their work

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school leadership works well together as a team. There is strong emphasis on working with the local and wider communities. The effective links with the church and the Children's Centre ensures that all groups, including those who are hard to reach, are served well. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and the school plan is well focused on pupils' learning and welfare. It provides a useful tool to guide school improvement. Subject leaders and governors understand the school's strengths and actions required to bring about improvement. Use of a non-class-based deputy headteacher has already helped the school bring about necessary improvements in teaching. Targets for improvement have been challenging and have contributed to good improvement since the last inspection. However, monitoring and evaluation is not sufficiently rigorous so as to provide greater challenge thus ensuring more rapid improvement.



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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<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 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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leverstock Green CofE Primary School (Voluntary Controlled), Leverstock Green, HP2 4SA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We would like to thank you all for helping us to find out all about your school. Particular thanks go to those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to talk to us. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and watching you work in lessons. We saw how very well you contribute to making the school a happy and enjoyable place to be.

Your school provides you with a good standard of education and the way it is helping you to develop personally and socially is good. You obviously enjoy school, especially the practical activities, and you all get on really well. You have very positive attitudes to your learning and behave extremely well. It is good to hear that your teachers will sort out any problems and that you feel confident to go to an adult if you need to share a problem. We agree with you that your teachers are kind and friendly and help you learn. Your teachers work hard on your behalf. They want to do their best for you and are trying to make things even better. You have all been working much harder recently and because of this you are now making good progress. The children in the nursery and reception classes get off to a super start to their time in school. Those of you in Years 1 and 2 have also done really well recently in your reading, writing and mathematics. We would like to see the pupils in Years 3 to 6 doing just as well. We were impressed with your 'pupil progress meetings' and think you are very grown up to discuss your progress with the teachers.

We are asking the headteacher, staff and governors to do three things to help improve the school and ensure that you make the best possible progress.

- Make sure that the teaching gets even better in Years 3 to 6 and keep on checking on how good it is.
- Make sure that the learning targets for those of you in Years 3 to 6 set you even greater challenges to help you make better and faster progress.
- Make sure that all the teachers mark your books regularly and tell you how you can improve your work.

Good luck and best wishes

Nichola Perry

Lead inspector