

Leighfield Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 120044 |
| Local Authority | Rutland |
| Inspection number | 327185 |
| Inspection date | 25 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Keith Edwards |

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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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 215 |
| 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 local authority |
| Headteacher | Mrs Debbie Sedgwick |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 December 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Newtown Road Uppingham Oakham Rutland LE15 9TS |
| Telephone number | 01572 823489 |
| Fax number | 01572 823459 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the rigor of the leadership at all levels in its efforts to raise achievement
- the quality of teaching and whether it is good enough to enable the girls to achieve their best in mathematics and the boys in writing
- the effectiveness of the school's monitoring, assessment and tracking procedures and whether or not they are sufficiently robust to enable all of the learners to reach their potential across the curriculum.

A range of school documents, particularly those concerning safeguarding procedures and the questionnaires returned by parents, were scrutinised. Inspectors looked at parts of lessons, met staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves the town of Uppingham. Although the majority of the pupils live locally, many are drawn from further afield. Almost all of the pupils have English as their first language. Attainment on entry is broadly average with a significant minority having achievements above national expectations. The proportion of children entitled to a free school meal and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage that caters for children in the Reception Year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has made good progress since the last inspection. The areas for improvement in the curriculum have been addressed. Pupils are motivated by the programme of well-chosen visits, visiting speakers and the range of activities beyond the school day that support their personal development. Furthermore, the school has made significant strides in improving the quality of education, particularly in terms of improving the quality of teaching, which is good, and monitoring the progress of the pupils. However, much remains to be done, even though the quality of learning is much improved and standards are rising. This is because teachers are still developing their skills in assessing pupils' level of understanding in each subject and inconsistencies remain in the use of this information when planning work for different groups of pupils in each class.

A common feature in all classes is the warmth of the relationships that encourages good behaviour and motivates pupils to do their best. Teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together to provide pupils with good support to develop pupils' independent learning skills. Interactive whiteboards are used successfully to demonstrate new techniques and teachers ensure that the pace of learning is good. Teachers are skilled in asking open-ended questions to gauge pupils' level of understanding and pupils are keen to respond because they know that their answers will be valued. However, teachers are not as successful at planning for the range of ability within each class. Furthermore, although teachers provide good oral feedback to pupils in class to make sure that they learn from their mistakes, the quality of marking in books lacks consistency and does not always help pupils to improve their work.

Pupils report that they really enjoy coming to school because the curriculum provides them with a range of opportunities. As one pupil commented, 'Our school is special because lessons are fun.' Attendance rates are outstanding and pupils arrive punctually. Pupils' personal development is good. They report that they feel safe and secure. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through the school's many initiatives to promote healthy eating. Participation in sport is strongly encouraged. Pupils value the care shown to them and feel increasingly involved in making decisions, particularly with the newly formed school council where they make a meaningful contribution to school improvement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of their own rural traditions and a growing awareness of cultural diversity in contemporary society. Art and music make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development and pupils achieve high standards in both. Regular opportunities for stage performance serve to boost pupils' self-esteem and build their confidence. The current production of *Jack and the Beanstalk* is uplifting for all concerned. By the time they leave, pupils have well-developed social and academic skills to assist their future economic well-being.

Pupils achieve well academically. In the Reception class, children are becoming confident, enthusiastic, independent learners who achieve well in each area of learning. However, the lack of a carefully designed outdoor area limits their opportunities to develop their skills fully when outside, which limits progress. Standards are consistently above average in communication skills and numeracy in Key Stage 1 and pupils reach above average standards in the national assessments for reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2, standards are rising again after a period when they slipped below the school's expectations, first in writing and then in mathematics. Current standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. The school's strategy of ensuring that pupils develop their thinking skills through a range of

practical and investigative activities has enabled them to progress well. In writing, standards have improved because pupils have been encouraged to use an exciting vocabulary and to be confident in their use of language. Pupils take great pride in their work and standards of presentation are consistently high. Pupils make only satisfactory progress in information and communication technology. This is because many of the school's computers are unreliable and this has limited their effectiveness as learning tools across the curriculum.

The welfare of the pupils is central to the work of the school. Leighfield has a caring and supportive pastoral ethos, which results in happy, well motivated pupils who clearly love their school. As one parent, echoing the views of many others, commented, 'I feel both of my children are well supported and see themselves as valued members of their school community.' Excellent induction procedures ensure a smooth transition into the Reception class and on to the feeder secondary schools. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils. The support provided for vulnerable pupils and those who find learning more difficult is good. Parents receive regular information about the curriculum and their child's progress, which they find helpful and informative.

Leadership and management of the school are good. Although the school's self-evaluation documents need updating, the opinions of senior staff are broadly accurate and have resulted in a clear strategy for continuing improvement. The priorities detailed in the school improvement plan, based on a clear evaluation of its contribution to the broader community, are entirely appropriate. The headteacher has spent the time since her appointment productively. Staff teamwork is good and acceptance of shared accountability for the school's performance is clearly evident. Expectations are rising and the confidence of parents is growing. The quality of governance is good. The governing body is fully involved in the school's strategic development. Governors too have grown in confidence and ability to hold school leaders to account, particularly in terms of understanding school effectiveness. The school is at the heart of the community that it serves and works well with other schools to heighten effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. However, resources in the outside area do not match the excellence of what is provided indoors. Inside, children learn in a stimulating environment that is well organised so that they are able to access resources independently. The teaching has some outstanding features. It is very creative and imaginative and, as a result, children of all abilities are highly enthusiastic about their learning. Staff provide timely interventions when the children are engaged in structured play activities, so language and social skills are constantly being consolidated and extended. Planning is of a high standard and builds well on what the children know and can do. There is a good balance of activities between those that the children can choose themselves and those that are directed by an adult. Plans to show how each child will learn best provide an outstanding record of the children's achievements and illustrate clearly how well the school takes account of the differing ability levels of the Early Years Foundation Stage children. Parents are very pleased with the overall provision and appreciate the efforts the staff make to ensure that children quickly settle into school. Currently, the outside play area does not provide enough scope for children to extend their learning and there are too few opportunities for them to link indoor and outdoor play. However, firm plans are in place to develop this area. The Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well led by a talented coordinator who is well focused on enabling children to achieve their potential. The level of care is excellent and children are safe and secure. The Early Years

Foundation Stage provides a secure grounding for all children and prepares them well for their transfer to Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching makes more rigorous use of assessment data when planning work to challenge pupils across the range of ability in each class and that marking conveys more information to pupils about how to improve their work.
- Develop the outdoor area as a learning facility for those children in the Reception class.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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| 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? | 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? | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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/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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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**

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leighfield Primary School, Rutland, LE15 9TS

We really enjoyed our visit to your school this month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. We particularly enjoyed our discussions with you and hearing your views. It was a privilege to be able to work with you in your classrooms, take part in your assembly and meet members of the school council. A particular thrill was watching the rehearsal for Jack and the Beanstalk. We thought you sang beautifully and were very impressed by the giant. We can understand why you are so proud of your school as there are many things that make it special. Here are some of them.

- You have a good attitude towards school and you achieve good standards in your work.
- You clearly enjoy school and you behave well.
- All the staff are very mindful of the need to keep you safe and happy.
- Your teachers make a good team and they make sure that learning is fun and exciting.
- The staff provide a wide range of activities to keep you interested. It is really good to see so many of you enjoying sport and music.
- Mrs Sedgwick and the staff are determined to make sure the school gets better and better.

Leighfield Primary is a good school. It is really important that you continue to work hard and make the most of the opportunities your school provides. We have made one or two suggestions that should help it to become even better. First, we have asked the staff to make even more use of information they collect about how well you are doing when they plan lessons so that they can provide you with work that is neither too tough nor too easy. Secondly, the school needs to develop a suitable outdoor play area for the children in the Reception class so they have even more opportunities to learn. I know that you can help the school to become even better by continuing to work hard.

We would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector