

St Leonard's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124199
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328077
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	225
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	Shelley East
Headteacher	Susan Alebon
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	St Leonard's Avenue Stafford ST17 4LT
Telephone number	01785 356890
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size primary school. It is situated in a Grade 2 listed building, built around the 1910s. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has had several changes of leadership. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. A private nursery operates within the school building, as does a privately managed before- and- after- school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents recognise this and the vast majority are satisfied with all it provides. Parental views were typified by one comment which said, 'This is a fantastic school which is warm and welcoming to parents and children.' Pupils are also very supportive of the school. They really appreciate how friendly and helpful the staff are within lessons which are made to be fun. They also enjoy school because everyone gets on so well together.

The senior leadership team has a clear commitment to raising standards. The quality of leadership and management is good. Its success in improving teaching and improving the effectiveness of the EYFS contributes to the school's good capacity to improve further. Governors carry out their statutory duties well and have become actively involved with the work of the school. Governors are aware of the strengths and areas of development for the school and are developing their skills to challenge the leadership team when necessary. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. It is based on a secure analysis of what is needed, from which an action plan has been produced. Although this was only instigated when the new headteacher arrived in September, there has already been a significant impact, especially within the school and local communities. Pupils have a good awareness of other faiths and cultures in Britain and the wider world, through the curriculum content which compensates for the limited ethnic mix within the school.

Children enter school with skills and abilities at expected levels. The EYFS provision is satisfactory. The outside learning area is not adequate to provide all-weather learning opportunities. With the current staffing arrangements, the role of the keyworker is also not fully developed. Staff successfully ensure that each pupil is supported well and that they are given equal opportunities to make progress in their academic and personal skills. Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average by the time they leave the school. Pupils do well in all subjects, although they do best in science, where they really enjoy the practical work. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress in lessons. There is effective teaching.

Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled at making the lessons enjoyable within a supportive and caring environment. Work matches the needs of all pupils because, in most subjects, the teachers' good planning is securely based on their accurate assessment and their personal knowledge of the pupils' abilities. Target setting is not yet established in all subjects. The marking of pupils' work is regular but it does not always provide sufficient guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is delivered, wherever possible, by engaging pupils through practical activities and enjoyment. A good range of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' learning and personal development.

Pastoral care is good and safeguarding requirements are met fully. The school's strong links with external agencies ensure good support for pupils who find learning difficult for whatever reason. The very good links with the secondary school help the older pupils when they move between the schools.

Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils behave well, enjoy school and know how to keep themselves safe. Attendance is consistently at or above the national average. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, eat healthily and take part in sport with enthusiasm. With above average standards, including good skills in information and communication technology (ICT), pupils are well prepared for their future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the EYFS is improving and is currently satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and enter Year 1 with broadly average standards in most areas of learning. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The indoor accommodation has recently been adapted and now provides a lively and stimulating environment. The outdoor environment is underdeveloped but improvements are planned. At present there is no discrete area that can be used freely throughout the day in all weathers. Many stimulating activities are provided across all six areas of learning. Planning is good for adult-led activities. However, it does not identify the learning that is to take place for the activities that children choose for themselves. Staff accurately assess children's learning during adult-led activities. Monitoring of progress during independent activity is less well developed. The school hosts parent meetings and staff visit children in their homes before their entry into school. These good induction procedures are effective in easing children's start to school. The Reception teacher is currently the keyworker for all 30 children which, although meeting requirements, limits the effectiveness of the provision. The EYFS is satisfactorily led and managed and staff are keen to further develop the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistent use of assessment/target setting systems and marking of pupils' work so that all pupils know how to further improve their work.
- Ensure that the planned improvements to the outdoor area in the EYFS are implemented as soon as possible.
- Review the arrangements in the Reception class to ensure the role of keyworker is manageable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils generally enter Year 1 with standards close to the national average and make good progress to be above average by the end of Year 2. Standards are improving steadily and the 2008 results were the highest since the last inspection. For several years, the progress in Key Stage 2 has been increasing and provisional school and local authority data indicate that this trend continued in 2008. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2008 were above the 2007 national average. This is consistent with the general good teaching seen in the school. The current Year 6 are well on target for even better outcomes as a result of some outstanding teaching in Year 6. In all classes, the level of work set for groups and the support provided are appropriate and all groups of pupils are making equal progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress in lessons because of good support by teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are very good with mutual respect between adults and pupils as well as among pupils. Pupils showed a good awareness of other faiths and cultures. The older pupils support the younger ones well, including organising clubs and activities for them at break times. Behaviour is good, and often outstanding, in lessons ensuring that all pupils learn in a safe and happy environment. Pupils enjoy their

lessons, especially the practical activities, and their attendance is similar to the national average. Pupils eat healthily during the day and are aware of what choices they should make. This has contributed to the school being awarded Healthy School status. Pupils are mature and sensible and take on the responsibilities available to them, such as being school councillors and helping in the library and the playground. Year 6 pupils also organise clubs for the younger children. They have developed a woodland garden of which they are very excited and proud. This is part of their environmental awareness activities that enable them to involve and contribute to the local community. Their good personal development, together with their academic skills, ensures that they are well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Within overall good teaching, there is some outstanding practice that promotes learning at a rapid pace. Teachers' good subject knowledge and great passion for teaching the subjects generate tremendous enthusiasm from the pupils. Work is usually well matched to pupils' abilities and most teachers make good use of assessment information in their planning. They make lessons interesting and fun. Often this is achieved by the effective use of clear and challenging timescales for activities. Teachers use a very good range of activities and make full use of ICT to stimulate pupils' learning. Learning objectives are shared with pupils who know, in some subjects but not all, what levels they are working at and what their targets are. The vast majority of teaching assistants provide good support for those who need additional help. Marking does not always give pupils sufficient advice on how to improve their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

To meet the needs of the pupils, the school is developing a skills-based curriculum and this is showing a positive effect on pupils' progress, attitudes to learning and their independence. A practical problem-solving approach, particularly for science, is well established. Planning ensures continuity between year groups and that work properly matches the needs of all abilities. Good opportunities exist for gifted and talented children. Where needed, a modified curriculum caters well for pupils who find learning more difficult to ensure they also make good progress. Themed activities, such as Book Week and Creativity Day, also enliven learning, and the school has plans to hold even more of these. The introduction of French is helping to further engage pupils' interests and broaden their horizons. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of interesting visits and trips. Pupils particularly enjoy the residential visits to local outdoor centres and to France which help to develop their independence. There is a good range of clubs, including some that the older pupils organise for younger children. Pupils can spend time at the weekend at the Conservation Club, and parents and children will be able to explore together at the Smart Science Club which starts in March. The many well-attended sports clubs have contributed to the school being awarded the Activemark.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is good. The school has established strong links with external agencies to help ensure pupils are cared for and supported well. Child protection procedures are securely

in place. Health and safety requirements are met. There are good systems for managing behaviour and monitoring attendance. Staff know pupils well and all pupils feel valued. Pupils say that teachers are very fair. The school works well to promote inclusion. Pupils who need extra help are effectively provided for and make good progress. Individual education plans are used well and staff help to ensure that pupils receive appropriate resources. Academic guidance is still developing and is not yet consistent across year groups and in all subjects. Marking of work is satisfactory overall. While some pupils know how to improve their work, others are unclear. While some pupils have regular opportunities to be involved in assessing their own work, this is inconsistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, although relatively new to the school, is very experienced and, with the longer-established deputy headteacher, forms a very good leadership team who have already had a good impact on improving the school. The school development plan is focused on raising attainment, and challenging targets are set. The self-evaluation is good and the leadership team has acted quickly to improve the provision in the EYFS which previously had limited support. An audit has been carried out to review the effectiveness of community cohesion on pupils' learning and an action plan is in place. Community cohesion is already good within both the school and the local community. Pupils have a good understanding of the global and national issues through curriculum content. Governance has improved since the last inspection. The governors are now better informed to enable them to carry out their duties.

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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?	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?	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

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?	3

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**

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Leonard's Primary School, Stafford ST17 4LT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing how your school is helping you learn. We were impressed by your enthusiasm for learning and how polite you were to visitors.

Your school is providing you with a good education and it is making sure you make good progress in your work. These are some of the good things about your school.

- The staff care about you and look after you well.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Your behaviour is good, and often outstanding in lessons, ensuring you can all make progress.
- You have developed good social and academic skills.
- Teaching and learning are good and you make good progress.
- There is a good range of clubs and after-school activities. We were particularly impressed by the woodland garden you have created and how Year 6 organise some of the clubs.
- Your headteacher and staff are working hard to improve your learning further.

In order to improve the school further, we have asked the headteacher to do the following:

- ensure that children in Reception know who their special adult (key worker) is who is always there to help them
- improve the outdoor provision for the Reception class as soon as possible
- ensure that the use of assessment systems and the marking of your work are consistent so that you all know how to improve your work.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood

Lead inspector