

# Lessness Heath Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101424
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	335714
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Hodge

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	555
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dorothy Schooling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Attwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Erith Road Belvedere Kent DA17 6HB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors spent more than two thirds of their time evaluating learning. They observed 26 lessons and small group activities involving all teachers and met with staff, the chair of governors and two groups of pupils. They looked at school documentation including development planning, records of pupils' progress, monitoring records and minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors analysed 148 parent, 34 staff and 68 pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils achieve in Years 1 to 6, particularly in their writing
- why pupils in Years 3 to 6 appear to achieve better than younger pupils
- how well governors and senior leaders promote improvement
- how well pupils' personal development helps them to enjoy and achieve.

## Information about the school

The school is much bigger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities comprises about one third of the school, which is more than is typically found and 10% speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. These include pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Nursery class, where approximately fifty children attend part time over the week, and in three Reception classes. The school has a number of awards, such as Healthy School and Eco School, reflecting its commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles and environmental awareness.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Lessness Heath is a good school where pupils say they really like what goes on and readily point to the positive ethos for learning. The smooth start to school in the Nursery is built upon well in the Reception classes. Pupils make up ground well in many areas of their learning given their lower than typical starting points. Parents' questionnaires returned indicate a high level of satisfaction.

Pupils' academic levels have risen recently, particularly in mathematics and science. By the time pupils leave in Year 6 they attain broadly average levels in their work. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress, although improving, is not so marked as teaching is not as consistently good and assessment information from Reception is not always used effectively on transfer to Year 1. Generally good teaching and a clear focus on ensuring pupils have exciting reasons to write, mean they do so with increasing confidence and flair. However, in different subjects, writing skills are not used so well. More able pupils in Years 1 to 6 are not always stretched sufficiently in their learning. In science, not enough enticing problems are planned to extend pupils' investigative skills.

Extra-curricular clubs, including booster groups for academic subjects as well as sporting or creative opportunities, extend pupils' horizons. Pupils from ethnic minorities achieve well, often due to the close support provided for their needs and the harmonious relationships that exist. Those who speak English as an additional language make up ground well in gaining verbal skills, aided by some innovative approaches to teaching. A small, but persistent, number of parents and carers do not send their children to school regularly enough, despite the school's efforts to work with them to ensure their children attend regularly. As a result, attendance levels are inadequate overall.

Pupils' good behaviour stems from their clear sense of right and wrong and the school's good promotion of their social and moral development. Pupils recognise that behaviour is not perfect, but feel very secure as staff listen and act on their concerns. The good care, support and guidance are particularly effective in providing pastoral support for vulnerable pupils. A wide variety of support, both in class and in small groups ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.

Good team work, promoted by the headteacher and senior staff, is a key factor in the school's success. Some insightful monitoring of teaching is leading to identifying areas to tackle, so the school knows there are still some variations in quality. Lots of work by the school, supported by outside professionals, has improved aspects of attendance. But the reality is that a small number of parents and carers have not yet responded well enough to these efforts. Governors give good support, know the school's strengths and weaknesses and challenge senior managers to improve. The school's track record of maintaining the effectiveness of many aspects of the school since the last inspection,

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and in raising pupils' attainment overall, reflects its good capacity to improve further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the relative weaknesses in pupils' writing in Years 1 to 6 by:
  - giving pupils more guidance about writing in different contexts and styles
  - helping pupils know how to judge the quality of their own writing and how to improve it
  - improving the presentation of writing for some, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Increase the consistency of teaching quality found throughout by:
  - ensuring that the more able pupils are stretched in their thinking
  - planning activities that captivate pupils' learning in all classes and in subjects, such as science work
  - ensuring information about pupils' progress is used more effectively to plan work and activities when transferring from Reception to Year 1 classes.
- Improve attendance for those pupils of parents and carers who persistently do not send their children to school by:
  - pinpointing those parents and carers who need reminding about the consequences of not sending their child to school regularly
  - working with outside agencies to seek other ways of highlighting to parents and carers about the benefits of regular attendance.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

As was evident in many lessons seen, pupils enjoy learning. They respond readily to the interesting work they have to do and to the way they are treated. An imaginary 'Oscar' movie ceremony in a Year 6 lesson, in which pupils had to pretend to be film stars, encouraged good levels of discussion, writing and enjoyment. Pupils, make good progress from the time they arrive until they leave for secondary school. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly good progress due to the well targeted support they receive. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2009 was broadly average. Current work and school checks on progress indicate that attainment is likely to be similar this year and pupils achieve well. Pupils' level of basic skills adequately prepares them for their future study, but for some their frequent absence hampers this preparation. School tracking shows that progress has been most marked in Reception and Years 3 to 6, with some pupils, such as those with special educational needs, making very good gains in their learning. Pockets of underachievement, particularly affecting mathematics' achievement at Years 1 and 2 and for more able pupils through the school, are steadily being remedied. This is having a positive impact on the overall profile of attainment, but there is more to do to ensure that this is sustained.

Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay fit and healthy and take part

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enthusiastically in physical activities in lessons and the playground. A very strong feature of pupils' good contribution to the school as a community is that playground helpers and prefects are seen as being as dependable as staff in solving problems. The active school council gives pupils opportunities to take responsibility and the members relish it, particularly in relation to influencing choices for school lunch. The pupils' sense of responsibility to others triggers not only consideration for others in the school, such as recycling waste paper and being library monitors, but has inspired fundraising and support for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' social development is very good so that pupils relate well and happily work together in lessons, assemblies, at lunchtimes and around the school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

A systematically planned curriculum provides well for pupils' basic skills through the school. Innovative activities in some classes are working well in inspiring pupils' learning, but these are not yet the 'norm' in every class. Modern foreign languages and studies of other countries, such as China and Spain, enhance pupils' understanding of others.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Activities for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are varied, exciting and making a difference in giving pupils confidence to speak. This development of a more creative curriculum is providing increased opportunities for teachers to plan typically good lessons in which pupils learn in enjoyable ways. In Year 5 for example, pupils skilfully developed their abilities in writing an account, aided by very good use of the audio-visual whiteboard, to show a video of their teacher. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils really benefitted from using simple computer programmes to present a 'photo story' to publicise the use of different areas of the school. In less effectively taught lessons, activities do not always inspire pupils' thinking, encourage their problem solving or stretch the more able by allowing them to devise their own approaches. Pupils have a good idea of their targets and teachers' marking gives helpful guidance to improve. That said, pupils do not always have a clear idea about how to judge the quality of their own work, particularly their writing, and the presentation of written work in Years 1 and 2 varies too much in quality.

The good care, guidance and support underpin pupils' confidence to learn and pupils know that they can turn to staff for help if needed. This is particularly true for the most vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A good range of small group activities, one-to-one support in classes and extra booster activities all combine to ensure pupils make good progress along with classmates. Links with outside agencies, such as the neighbourhood police team, help boost pupils' sense of safety.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's clear vision for the school is well communicated and translated into action and initiatives by the staff acting as a team. The commitment to driving up standards, whilst preserving what are already strengths, has been skilfully tackled. Self-evaluation is built on good monitoring of teaching and learning and on assessment of how improvements can be made. Governors regularly visit the school to assess the progress of initiatives, but recognise that they do not always note the outcomes of such visits to best effect. They do act as 'critical friends' however to gauge the impact of decisions made on pupils' learning. Staff and resources are particularly well deployed for the benefit of pupils from ethnic minority groups and those with special needs and/or disabilities. All safeguarding requirements, including the close vetting of staff

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appointments, are robustly met and risks are regularly evaluated. The school effectively ensures pupils have equality of opportunity and discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The very good contribution the school makes to its own internal community, combined with pupils' understanding of those living much further from the school gates in this country and beyond, means that community cohesion aspects are promoted well. Good links with others, such as local secondary schools and outside agencies, help enhance pupils' learning, particularly for vulnerable pupils and those speaking English as an additional language.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start when they join the Nursery and then move into Reception classes. Children play and learn well in the Nursery. The range of activities and provision is not as extensive as the Reception classes, but children love having exciting areas to play in such as the class spaceship. This good progress continues and children do particularly well in extending their personal, social and emotional development so that they continue to work and play together well. Adults pay good attention to developing children's number, language and communication skills which are low when children start school.

There is a good balance between such directed activities and opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. Adult helpers effectively support children in the outside areas, but are not always as quick to guide those still using the inside activities and areas. Children thoroughly enjoy learning in the relatively small, but well-equipped,



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outside area. They make homes, beds and food based on the story of the Gruffalo, definitely creating a buzz of excitement.

Very good partnership between all adults promotes the effective welfare and good day-to-day assessment. The leadership and management are good and have facilitated good systems for planning, recording and moderating children's achievement. When children enter Year 1, their language and number abilities, although improving, are not yet at the expected levels. The social, emotional and physical development is closer to those levels expected.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

There was around a 27% response from parents and carers. A relatively small number of parents and carers added comments to their responses. These were a mixture of positive responses and areas that they felt could be improved. The positive comments included praise for the children's enjoyment of the school, the quality of teaching and the range of activities. Others felt that communication was not always good between teachers and parents. The inspectors found that the level of communication from the school, via open evenings, newsletters and one-to-one meetings, was at a level typical of many schools. Inspectors agree that there is typically good teaching, although this is not always even across the school and senior staff are developing ways of making it even better.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lessness Heath to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 148 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 550 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	59	57	39	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	54	66	45	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	68	46	71	78	7	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	44	74	50	6	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	63	43	81	55	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	38	86	58	5	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	63	43	79	53	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	32	78	53	7	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	40	81	55	5	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	32	81	55	11	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	30	87	59	7	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	69	47	73	49	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	49	73	49	1	1	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lessness Heath Primary School, London DA17 6HB

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at playtimes. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. We think that Lessness is a good school. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Good teaching is helping you make good progress in your lessons.
- You reach broadly average attainment in English, mathematics and science, and it is improving. Well done for the recent improvement in mathematics and science!
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- Your behaviour is good and you all get on well regardless of your backgrounds.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and all adults.
- The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.
- Adults look after you very well and are always ready to help you.
- The headteacher and staff are working together well to make the school get even better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

- Give you more help with your writing so you can write in lots of different ways and styles and to know what makes 'good' writing.
- Help the teachers to make sure every lesson is at least good with lots of exciting activities like the 'Oscar' ceremony I attended in Year 6!
- Work with some of your parents and carers who don't realise how important it is that some of you come to school regularly and don't miss out on the learning taking place!

You can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, attending regularly and, for some, working hard at your handwriting.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector

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