

Lunts Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111199
Local Authority	Halton
Inspection number	337638
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Eithne Proffitt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jill Greaves
Headteacher	Mrs Dee Denton
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, observing eight teachers and one higher level teaching assistant and also inspected the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspectors spent approximately 55% of their time inspecting pupils' learning. Meetings were held with the senior and middle leadership team, Chair of the Governing Body, staff, pupils and parents. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school improvement plan; a wide range of school policies; safeguarding procedures; records of pupils' progress, including individual education plans for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; and the school's self-evaluation procedures. Inspectors also took account of responses to questionnaires returned by 159 parents and carers and 139 pupils.

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

- the quality of teaching and learning that secures such high attainment and achievement
- how the school assures progress across a themed curriculum
- the extent of pupils' awareness of our culturally diverse society
- how leaders and managers at all levels contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school.

Information about the school

Lunt's Heath is a slightly larger-than-average primary school. The school has very few pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is well below average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Within the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, none are at an early stage of learning to speak English or speak English as an additional language. Lunt's Heath has achieved the Artsmark, Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, and National Healthy Schools status.

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

1

Main findings

This is a good school. It has many outstanding aspects in that it aims high for its pupils, knows itself exceptionally well, is unequivocal in tackling any signs of underachievement, and takes exceptional care of its pupils. These strengths effectively support the pupils' outstanding attainment, achievement and personal development. Pupils place their trust in the adults in school and are developing into mature young people with a real sense of responsibility.

The school has improved considerably since its previous inspection and this is due in no small measure to the dynamic drive provided by the school's leaders and managers, including the governors but especially the headteacher. This persistent resolve and determination to improve pupils' learning has resulted in impressive pupil attainment across the school. By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards in all subjects are significantly above national averages and have been sustained at these high levels for the past three years. The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress show that current pupils are on course to achieve similarly challenging targets. Continuous and precise monitoring picks up immediately on any pupils who may find learning difficult. Intervention is swift, appropriate support is provided and these pupils make equally good progress towards their learning goals. Focused recruitment, professional development and regular checks on teaching and learning have ensured that teaching across the school is now good overall and some is outstanding. This is effectively supporting pupils' continued good learning and progress and outstanding achievement over their time in school.

The school's evaluation of its own work is rigorous and honest and leads to well-considered priorities for improvement. Actions raised in the school improvement plan are linked clearly to their intended impact on pupils' academic achievement. This all demonstrates well the outstanding capacity that the school has for sustained improvement in the future.

All adults are committed to providing a rich, supportive environment that helps pupils thrive and contributes to the many outstanding elements of their personal development. Extremely effective safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are, and feel, safe and secure. Pupils love coming to school and this is reflected in their very high attendance levels. They enjoy their lessons and work hard at set tasks. However, not all teachers are using the most effective assessment techniques in lessons to provide further opportunities to move pupils' learning even further forward. The curriculum is in a period of transition, moving to topic-based learning and is enriched with a range of different learning experiences. Whilst pupils' enjoyment of this is tangible, the curriculum is in the very early stages of development and is not yet effective in securing

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further improvements in pupils' progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and further pupil progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers capitalise on learning opportunities in lessons to: assess pupils as they learn; adapt their teaching and the lesson to meet individual needs; and maximise opportunities to move pupils' learning forward
 - ensuring that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given more opportunities to explore activities and learning experiences for themselves both indoors and in the outdoor area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

'I like school because I like to learn.' was a comment reflecting the many positive remarks of the pupils. This encouraging attitude is evident throughout the school as pupils of all abilities apply themselves diligently at work and play. They listen well and work successfully, both independently and in collaborative groups, making good progress in their learning.

When they begin Year 1, most pupils are working well above the levels expected for their age. During Key Stage 1 they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach standards which are significantly above average by the end of Year 2. This pattern of progress and attainment continues across Key Stage 2 and results in a good proportion of pupils leaving Year 6 with standards that are significantly above average in all subjects, equipping them outstandingly well for their next stage of education. The school recognises the need to prepare pupils for the world of work and is currently exploring appropriate business and enterprise links to extend pupils' experiences of employment, education, training and technology.

Pupils take their selected or elected roles of responsibility very seriously. School councillors; playleaders; house captains; sports captains; reading buddies; road safety officers; and the crucial crew, to name but a few, are instrumental in raising their peers' confidence and self-esteem, promoting pupils' exemplary behaviour, and raising the profile of the school through their charitable works within the community. Overall pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school continually seeks opportunities for pupils to experience the diverse cultures of society that are not represented in the community it serves.

Pupils feel safe in school and from an early age develop a keen sense of how to stay out of harm's way. Older pupils are particularly skilled in recognising the dangers posed by their use of the internet and mobile phones. Pupils fully understand how to maintain healthy lifestyles and speak knowledgeably about the importance of diet and exercise. They enjoy the wide range of physical education opportunities provided and the wide variety of after-school clubs, both cultural and sporting, are often over-subscribed.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The good quality teaching overall, accounts for the good learning and progress throughout the school. Relationships are very secure and there is an atmosphere of keenness as pupils clearly want to do well for their teachers. Highly effective teaching assistants are well deployed in and out of class and their valued support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress in their learning. Teachers use marking well to guide pupils in improving their work. The school has set up thorough systems to check on pupils' progress over time and these are used well by teachers to ensure that no child is in danger of falling behind. School leaders are committed to providing the very best for pupils and have been pivotal in improving the quality of teaching. They continue to work towards ensuring that all teaching is of the highest possible standard. In the more effective lessons, teachers are able to pick up on how their pupils are learning, capitalise on any errors or misconceptions, quickly assess what they need to do next, and create teaching points that can move all the pupils' learning forward. In these focused sessions the pace of learning and progress is markedly increased. This assessment to support learning within

¹ 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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lessons is not consistently applied across the school.

Pupils' enjoyment of learning is enhanced by the curriculum. They learn to speak French, take part in many prestigious music events, develop considerable skills in a range of sporting activities, and experience learning beyond the classroom through residential visits. The school has embarked on a new topic-based, skills-led curriculum that is designed to promote enhanced skills development and progress across subjects other than English and mathematics. This is still very much in its infancy and, whilst there is evident excitement about its potential, managers agree that it is still a 'work in progress', with areas still to be developed.

This is a truly inclusive school where the pastoral care and support for all pupils is outstanding. All adults know individual pupils very well and work very hard to ensure that pupils feel safe and happy in school. 'It's great here, I love it!' typifies the view of many pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Pivotal to the school's continued success is the visionary leadership of the headteacher and the drive and commitment from the senior leadership team. Governors say the headteacher embeds in the staff a, 'relentless pursuit of the best for the pupils' and they are right. They support and challenge the school in equal measure and regularly monitor the impact of their work. This has resulted in good improvement in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Equal opportunities for all and giving every pupil the best are at the core of all the school's activities and all pupils are helped to succeed. The headteacher has created a particularly successful system of devolved leadership within the school whereby all teachers are fully aware of school priorities, responsible for putting them into action and accountable to governors for their success. The senior management and middle management teams assist the headteacher most effectively, engendering strong teamwork in the staff with a clear focus on continuous improvement.

Teaching staff respond well to the advice and support they receive through monitoring and evaluation, and welcome opportunities to work alongside each other to improve their skills.

The school involves parents and carers well in their children's learning and parents and carers feel they can approach any member of staff for help and support. Outstanding

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partnerships with external agencies and providers ensure an extended range of provision and services. These have an outstanding impact on pupils' learning.

Safeguarding procedures are also outstanding. They are well-embedded in practice, integrated into the curriculum and regularly and extensively monitored. They assure that all pupils are protected well.

The school promotes community cohesion well. It is particularly successful in helping pupils understand how to embrace and contribute to the school and local community and forges effective and supportive links beyond the immediate area that are beginning to develop pupils' awareness of their place in our diverse society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in Reception with the level of skills and knowledge expected for their age. Good links with a considerable number of pre-schools and a broad range of assessment tools help staff to build up a clearer picture of these starting points. Children quickly settle into routines, behave well and help each other. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are working beyond the Early Learning Goals across all the different areas of learning, having made good progress in their first year at school. These youngest pupils are keen and excited learners. Their planned curriculum covers all the required areas of learning, providing them with structured, progressive activities that meet their needs and ensure good outcomes. However, these activities are often overly adult-directed. As a result, the children sometimes lack opportunities to explore their world for themselves or to think imaginatively and creatively. The outdoor provision is

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continually available and the school has ambitious proposals for extensive improvements. Currently, however, whilst the outdoor and woodland areas are incorporated into the provision, planned activities for the children do not fully extend or enhance those indoors on a larger scale, across all the areas of learning. The manager provides good leadership and recognises that there is more to do to capitalise fully on pupils' interests and provide sufficient opportunities for them to enjoy learning through experimentation both indoors and out.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the school. In particular, there were a significant number of complimentary comments about the quality of the care, support and encouragement that pupils are given and the team ethos within all staff, teaching and non-teaching. Comments include: 'My children are in a very caring environment both educationally and emotionally' and 'The school is an inviting place ... I am kept well informed of my child's progress.' The inspectors found no reason to disagree with these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lunt's Heath Primary School 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 159 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 277 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	116	73	41	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	130	82	29	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	120	75	38	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	111	70	46	29	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	123	77	36	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	113	71	45	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	107	67	51	32	0	0	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)	94	59	55	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	108	68	48	30	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	105	66	48	30	3	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	89	56	65	41	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	117	74	41	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	122	77	35	22	1	1	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lunt's Heath Primary School, Widnes, WA8 9RJ

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and listening to what you had to say. We agree with you when you say yours is a good school but we also think that it has exciting features too!

These are the main things we found out when we visited you:

- you and your teachers have worked hard to make sure that by Year 6, you attain extremely high standards in English, mathematics and science
- you are taught well and your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting and that you make good progress
- it is good to know you are very happy with the way all the adults look after you, care for you and help you to feel safe in school
- we were really moved to see how much you took care of all your friends on the playground - you behave very well indeed and you are so polite and welcoming to visitors
- your headteacher leads the school exceptionally well and all the staff and governors work well together in a strong team.

To help your school to improve even further, we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do the following:

- make sure that you make better progress in lessons by encouraging your teachers to think about how you are learning and to point you in the right direction to make that learning even better
- provide lots of opportunities for the little ones in Reception to explore their interests in their classrooms and in their wonderful outdoor areas.

You too can help your school by continuing to be the best that you can be!

Thank you once again for being so kind and friendly – we really enjoyed seeing you at work and play!

Yours sincerely

Mrs Eithne Proffitt

Lead inspector

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