

Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114962
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338484
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Ogunsanlu
Headteacher	Mrs J Tunney
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2007
School address	Limes Avenue Chigwell Essex
Telephone number	0208 5011115
Fax number	0208 5012993
Email address	admin@limesfarm-inf.essex.sch.uk

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Inspection number	338484

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed six teachers and nine lessons. They met with the Chair of the Governing Body, a carer, staff and pupils. Inspectors also looked at a range of school policies and plans, records of pupils' progress, questionnaires returned by staff and the 74 questionnaires submitted by parents and carers.

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

- how the teaching meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs
- the extent of pupils' achievement in mathematics
- measures taken by the school to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Information about the school

Most pupils who attend this small school come from the immediate locality although a small minority travel from further afield. About half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the remainder represent a wide range of other ethnicities. About a fifth come from Asian backgrounds. The proportion who come from homes where English is not the first language is well above average. However, only a minority of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average for a school of this size. Fewer pupils than average are identified as having special educational needs. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or speech and communication difficulties. The school holds Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

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

This is a good school where pupils are cared for well. They are known as individuals and receive high levels of support and encouragement. As a result, pupils develop into confident young learners who show respect for one another's backgrounds and ideas. Pupils are well behaved in and out of lessons. They feel very safe and secure in school and are confident that they can turn to any adult on the staff if they have a problem.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children's skills vary considerably when they enter the Nursery but many are at low levels for their age in most areas of their learning. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, their attainment is broadly average. Progress is good throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make as good progress as their peers. Last year the school identified that pupils were not making enough progress in mathematics. This has been successfully addressed this year by the introduction of target teaching groups, which have helped particular pupils fill gaps in their understanding of mathematical concepts. A structured scheme for teaching pupils letters and letter sounds has also been instrumental in helping them to develop more secure literacy skills.

Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour extremely well. Lessons are structured carefully to build upon pupils' previous learning. Pupils enjoy the wide range of exciting experiences offered through the curriculum. For example, in a history lesson preparing them for a visit to Clacton-on-sea, Year 2 pupils examined photographs of the seaside 100 years ago. They keenly discussed the similarities and differences between the photographs and their own modern-day experiences.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a strong team which drives the school's work forward successfully. Careful monitoring and analysis of performance mean that they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are aware that community cohesion is a weaker element of their work: although pupils have a sound understanding of the different faiths and cultures within their own locality, they have limited experience of other communities in the United Kingdom and overseas. Governors are supportive of the school but lack well-organised systems to monitor the school's work and evaluate its performance. School development planning is satisfactory but plans often lack clear success criteria which makes it difficult for governors and staff to evaluate the impact of their work. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully increased pupils' attendance, so that it is now average, and has improved the planning for more able pupils so they are now able to achieve well. These improvements, together with the good leadership of the headteacher and strong support from staff, parents and carers, mean that the school is well placed to continue to

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

improve in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the school improvement process by
 - extending governors' evaluation systems to ensure they gain a full picture of school performance so they can take a more active role in planning for the future
 - identifying clear and measurable success criteria by which leaders can judge the impact of their plans.
- Improve community cohesion by developing meaningful links with schools and communities within the wider United Kingdom and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are keen to learn and apply themselves well in lessons. They work well individually, in pairs and small groups. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson for example, pupils worked together to solve a tricky problem involving odd numbers. They discussed ideas, tried out different approaches before arriving at a range of answers, all of which were correct. With the teacher's help, they were able to determine a strategy to help them work out similar problems in a methodical manner. Girls and boys from all ethnic backgrounds and those from homes where English is not the first language, achieve well and thoroughly enjoy learning. Pupils who are beginners in English make good progress in acquiring the language, which then helps them to achieve well in other subjects. Asian pupils apply themselves well in class and make good progress in all aspects of their learning. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make especially good progress in small intervention groups, where they develop their confidence and skills in literacy and numeracy.

The school's work to gain Healthy Schools status has helped pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, which the vast majority adopt. Many enjoy the nutritious school lunches and packed lunches usually contain healthy options. Pupils have regular physical education lessons that introduce them to a variety of sports and help them work towards gymnastics awards. Pupils make a good contribution to their own school community, through their work as class monitors and school councillors. Their contribution to the wider community is more limited. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a keen understanding of right and wrong and a healthy sense of competition.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A wide range of activities is organised to make learning fun for pupils. A comprehensive programme of visits adds interest and relevance to pupils' learning and provides good opportunities for them to develop their personal and social skills. A visit to Regents' Park Zoo, for example, stimulated pupils to make giraffes and gorillas from clay and cardboard, design lion masks and, with the help of the teacher, construct a simple graph to show their favourite animals. A visiting theatre group regularly presents historically themed days, to teach pupils about, for example, the Great Fire of London. A good number of pupils participate in after-school clubs such as multi-skills, recorders and tennis. Parents and carers endorse the quality of the curriculum and how the school cares for their children. One, echoing the views of many, wrote, 'My child loves coming to school, is happy and developing in all areas, thanks to the staff.'

Pupils have many opportunities to use the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics in meaningful ways in different subjects. In a Year 2 lesson in religious education, for example, a group of more-able pupils worked together to make a presentation on Judaism to the rest of the class. They discussed the information they had seen on the interactive whiteboard and wrote down their ideas in simple sentences. They delivered their presentation with great confidence and enthusiasm.

Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching and high levels of care and attention. Those with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties benefit greatly from the secure relationships they enjoy with their teachers and teaching assistants. Their needs are carefully assessed and individual programmes implemented to help them learn and develop successfully. Their progress is tracked very carefully to assess the effectiveness

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

of the interventions. Good links with external support agencies ensure that pupils receive specialist help in, for example, speech and communication. Very effective work has been done to raise attendance levels and this has ensured that pupils do not miss important parts of their education. The school continues to work with parents and carers to improve punctuality which remains an issue for some pupils.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to maintain pupils' attention successfully, such as questioning, paired discussion and effective use of interactive whiteboards. Activities are planned to meet the needs of different groups within the class so that all are able to make effective progress. Teachers always make it clear to pupils what they have to do to achieve success and this is an effective way of harnessing their motivation and enthusiasm. Occasionally too many worksheets are used, which limit pupils' creativity and opportunities to write at length.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a firm but sensitive steer to the school's work, embedding ambition successfully amongst staff and driving improvement well. She provides an excellent example to staff in her day-to-day dealings with pupils, parents and carers. They value her approachability and how she is always on hand to greet and chat to them at the start of the day. New staff are supported well so that they quickly become useful members of the team.

There are clear procedures to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Safeguarding policies are good and reviewed regularly to ensure their effectiveness. Staff are trained effectively in safeguarding and new staff checked carefully to ensure their suitability. Staff promote equality of opportunity well, analysing information about pupils' progress to ensure all are achieving well. Racist incidents are rare, but senior leaders tackle them promptly if they do occur.

The school has completed a basic audit of provision for community cohesion and has an action plan in place to secure improvement. At present, pupils' knowledge and understanding of communities outside their own experience, is limited.

Governors are supportive and have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some governors visit regularly and their findings are presented at governing body meetings. However, the governing body lacks a clear structure for monitoring the work of the school to enable them to gain a thorough

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

understanding of its performance so they can contribute more effectively to planning for improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children have difficulties with social and communication skills when they first start in the Nursery but they quickly settle in and begin to develop their confidence and independence. The atmosphere is warm and inviting and this means that children come into school happily each morning, ready to engage in all the activities provided for them. They make good progress throughout Nursery and Reception although only a minority of children reach nationally expected levels by the time they transfer to Year 1.

The development of personal and social skills is a high priority in the Nursery. The children develop good manners and begin to understand how to share and take turns during snack time, when they also learn about healthy options. They learn to play and work together and reflect about their own and others' feelings. When designing a poster 'Wanted - a good friend,' one Reception child wrote, 'I think a good friend is someone who plays with you.'

There is a good balance between activities that are directed by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Children in Reception participate eagerly in daily sessions where they learn letter sounds and how to combine these into words. Adults model language well for them, helping them to increase their vocabulary and communication skills. Children enjoyed playing in the 'Doctor's Surgery' and the 'Rainbow Cafe' where they developed their imagination as well as their early writing

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

skills as they 'wrote appointments' and 'took orders' from 'customers'.

Children's progress is assessed and tracked carefully. Prompt action is taken if specific children need support from external agencies, for example with behaviour or communication. Senior leaders have rightly identified the need to extend the range of activities available in the outdoor area to provide more opportunities for children to engage in literacy and numeracy activities.

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

Parents and carers were very positive about the school's work. All agreed that their children enjoyed school. The overwhelming majority said that the school was well led and managed, their children were kept safe, the teaching was good and that they were kept well informed about their children's progress. A very few were concerned that their children did not make enough progress but the inspection team found that pupils throughout the school built successfully upon their skills and knowledge and achieved well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	72	21	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	61	28	38	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	53	33	45	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	46	35	47	2	3	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	43	58	30	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	51	33	45	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	47	35	47	2	3	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)	24	32	39	53	1	1	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	39	43	58	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	35	42	57	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	34	45	61	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	43	40	54	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	57	30	41	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery, Chigwell, IG7 5LP

Thank you so much for welcoming us recently and telling us all about your school.

Thank you also to those pupils who talked with inspectors about their work and gave their views of the school. Your contributions, along with everything else that we saw, helped us form a clear view about how well your school works. You go to a good school and these are some of the important things we found out about it:

- all the adults take really good care of you and keep you very safe in school
- you understand what it means to be healthy, and many of you enjoy the nutritious school lunches and bring healthy options in your packed lunches
- you work well together in lessons and help each other when necessary
- your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school
- you work hard and always try to do your best
- the teaching is good and helps you to make good progress
- you really enjoy all the different activities that the adults organise for you
- the children in Nursery quickly settle in and get a good start to their education.

We have asked your headteacher and governors to establish better links with schools and communities in different areas of the United Kingdom and overseas to help you understand what life is like for children in other places. We have also asked the school governors to keep a more careful check on what is happening in school so they can help the headteacher and teachers with their plans for improving the school even more.

You can play your part in helping your school become even better by making sure you continue to work hard, behave well and attend school punctually every day.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.