

Leigh Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118278
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339180
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Robin Gaff

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	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beverley Doherty
Headteacher	Wendy Wallace-Holman, Sue Clement
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed eight lessons, and every teacher present in the school was seen at least once. Inspectors spent a total of five hours observing pupils' learning. They held meetings with staff, pupils and a group of governors, and met informally with a small number of parents and carers. They looked at planning and evaluation documents, as well as reports completed by external bodies, including the local authority. Inspectors scrutinised the school's own analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. A total of 60 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and 64 questionnaires completed by pupils were received and analysed.

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

- the extent of the school's success in improving pupils' achievement, particularly in science and mathematics
- the accuracy of the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- the impact of developments in the curriculum on pupils' learning and progress
- the extent of the school's success in promoting community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller-than-average primary school. Children start this school in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class where they join Year 1 pupils. Because of the school's small size, pupils in Years 2 to 5 are also taught in mixed-aged classes. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average and they cover a wide spectrum of needs. The headteacher will be retiring at the end of the current term, and is currently sharing the role with a former headteacher who joined the school in January 2010. The governors have appointed a new headteacher who will take up her post at the beginning of the summer term.

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

Leigh is a good school. Children thrive because the staff know them very well and provide them with good levels of support. The staff work effectively with parents and carers who are extremely appreciative of the good quality of education and care. One parent, whose comments were typical, said, 'The teachers have a wonderful understanding of both of my children.' The school's arrangements for safeguarding children are extremely thorough and closely match the best practice found nationally. As a result, pupils feel extremely safe and secure in the school. Pupils show an outstanding appreciation of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and enjoy taking part in a range of physical activities. They have many opportunities to take on responsibilities, and make a good contribution to the school and wider communities. Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons, where their positive attitudes to learning enhance their progress. Their good social and moral development is exemplified by the consideration and care which older pupils show for their younger peers. Pupils develop good skills, including team-working and problem solving, which will stand them in good stead in later life. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start to school. They are independent, confident learners and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is broadly average. In last year's national tests their attainment was high in English, but this was not the case in mathematics and science. Pupils generally make good progress throughout the school and this is increasingly being seen in pupils' current mathematics and science work in Years 3 to 6. Teachers and teaching assistants help to create a stimulating and supportive learning environment in which children of different abilities and from different backgrounds can succeed. Lessons include whole-class, pair and group work, though teachers do not always provide tasks which are sufficiently well matched to the developmental stage and interests of all their pupils. Leaders and managers recognise the need to share more widely the good and outstanding teaching which already exists. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly which enables pupils to know how well they are doing. Sometimes their comments are not sufficiently precise for pupils to know what to do next to improve their work. The school offers a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which it adapts well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Care, guidance and support are a strength of the school. It has established strong links with a range of outside bodies, which helps provide expert and effective support for pupils who need it.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. Leaders and managers show a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have taken effective steps to build on the former and successfully address the latter, for example in

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improving the rate of pupils' progress in subjects where this was less secure. Governors bring an extremely impressive range of skills and expertise to the school. They have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities, including their duty to promote community cohesion. They work very effectively with the joint headteachers to ensure that pupils' learning and day-to-day routines are being maintained well during the period of transition and preparation for their new headteacher starting in April.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics and science, by:
 - sharing more widely best practice in teaching
 - ensuring that teachers' marking includes sufficiently detailed comments to enable all pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work
 - ensuring that all lessons include activities that are closely matched to the interests and abilities of all the pupils in the class.

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

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been broadly average in recent years. Their progress in Year 6, as well as that of younger pupils, is now good. In mathematics and science, current work indicates pupils' progress has improved and is closer to matching the level of their performance in English. Pupils throughout the school say they enjoy their lessons. They work well together, and are prepared to listen to and learn from one another as well as from their teachers. They respond well to their teachers' good use of questions and prompts, for example, in a religious education lesson where Years 1 and 2 pupils volunteered perceptive and imaginative ideas about 'why the church is a special place'.

Pupils are very polite and welcoming towards visitors and are keen to share their ideas, as well as their pride in their school. They are not concerned about bullying, and they enjoy the feeling of security they gain from being part of a close-knit community of children and adults. One commented, 'If you hurt yourself in the playground, all your friends come rushing over to help you!' The school's success in promoting healthy lifestyles is demonstrated by its having gained the Healthy Schools, Activemark and Travel Plan (platinum) awards. It has helped pupils to take pleasure in healthy eating, by choosing healthy snacks at playtime, and by raising money on 'Fruity Fridays' to buy fruit to share every day. Pupils contribute well to the wider community through, for example, the money they raise to support a child in India, a tradition in the school for many years. This link helps pupils to develop a good understanding of different cultures, which is also enhanced by their celebration of festivals, such as Diwali, from a range of faiths. They respond well to opportunities for spiritual development, for example in assemblies, through their enthusiastic singing and respectful observance of time for reflection. Pupils' good attendance and the level of their key skills contribute to their good preparation for future economic well-being.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good relationships with their classes and high expectations with regard to work and behaviour. Most include a good range of activities that succeed in engaging pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on calculating area, all the pupils made good progress because they were given different tasks which corresponded well to their very different levels of ability and confidence. However in another class, consisting of pupils from different year groups, all the pupils were given the same task. As a result, some made less progress than others because they found the activity too hard to complete in the time available. Teachers check pupils regularly and involve them well in assessing their own and each others' work. They make good use of resources, for example interactive audio-visual whiteboards, and adapt their lessons according to pupils' responses. Written comments celebrate and confirm pupils' successes, but teachers do not always give sufficiently detailed advice about how to improve. The school has substantially improved its information and communication technology facilities so that all pupils have good access to up-to-date resources. It has adapted its curriculum well to meet the needs of groups and individuals, for example by providing

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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one-to-one and small group sessions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. One parent commented on how her son’s interest in reading had been increased by his teacher’s provision of ‘boy-friendly’ books. The school has introduced an innovative programme designed to increase pupils’ well-being and self-confidence, which is having a good impact on pupils’ emotional maturity. There is a good range of well-attended after-school clubs.

Many parents and carers comment very favourably on how well the school has helped their children settle in, including those who joined the school at other than the normal times for transition. They say that teachers are very approachable, and keep them well informed about their children’s progress, as well as about any difficulties they may be encountering, so that they can work together to resolve them. The school also helps pupils have a smooth transition to local secondary schools.

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?

Leaders and managers regularly and accurately assess the quality of teaching. They have identified the reasons for pupils’ disappointing performance in science and mathematics in 2009. They are implementing measures to remedy weaknesses in teaching in these areas, which are now bearing fruit in pupils’ day-to-day work. The school improvement plan includes specific, realistic and measurable targets, to guide priorities and assess progress. All teachers value being able to contribute to the school’s development, for example as subject coordinators. Governors’ knowledge and understanding of their specific responsibilities is outstanding. They ensure that the school adheres to all requirements with regard to safeguarding, and research best practice in other schools. They have revised the school’s practice accordingly. Governors have carried out an extensive audit of the school’s local and wider situation. Strong links with the local community and with schools in India and Africa are being complemented by a twinning arrangement with an inner-city school in this country to widen pupils’ understanding and awareness of others. The school is a happy and harmonious community. Its successful promotion of equal opportunities is demonstrated by the absence of racist incidents, and by the fact that groups within the school, including potentially vulnerable children, achieve at least as well as their peers. The school regularly consults parents and carers about its provision and plans for the future, and the overwhelming majority are happy, or very happy, with their children’s experience.

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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	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school has very good links with local nurseries and other early years providers. This, together with the way in which it ensures that parents and carers are fully involved in the process, enables children to make a smooth transition. When they join the school, children’s development of skills is broadly in line with national expectations. They make excellent progress in all areas of learning and development, and very much enjoy taking part in the excellent range of activities they are offered, and benefit from imaginative provision, such as the ‘travel agents’ area. In one science-based activity, children learned a great deal about the properties and function of magnets by having hands-on experiments with them in a fun and interesting way. Regular meetings and daily diaries ensure that the school works very effectively with parents and carers to support children’s development. Assessment and tracking are rigorous, which enables adults to plan effectively to meet the needs of individual children. Those who require extra help are quickly identified, and effective links with external agencies ensure they receive it promptly. Highly skilled teachers, teaching assistants and other adults use effective questioning to assess children’s learning and plan for their next steps. Children enjoy going on visits and benefit from visitors to school that enrich their learning. Good hygiene routines are embedded. Although the small outside area limits the range of available play opportunities, this does not prevent children’s overall development from being outstanding.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and many take the trouble to express in detail their contentment with their children’s education and the care they receive. Almost all parents and carers believe that the school keeps them well informed about their children’s progress, helps them to support their children’s learning, and takes account of their suggestions. Very few express reservations about its response to their concerns or about how it deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the views of parents and carers largely coincided with their own.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 pupils registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Leigh 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	68	18	30	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	67	19	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	50	29	48	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	60	23	38	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	62	22	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	58	22	37	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	65	19	32	1	2	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)	27	45	27	45	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	60	21	35	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	43	30	50	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	42	31	52	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	42	27	45	1	2	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.



3 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leigh Primary School, Tonbridge TN11 8QP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors during our visit. You really helped us get to know your school by talking to us and filling in the questionnaire.

You help to make Leigh a good school through your good behaviour and the way you help one another, particularly younger children when they join the school. You feel very safe in school because you know that the adults, as well as your friends, are there to help you. You really do understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Well done! You enjoy developing problem-solving and teamwork skills in lessons, and this will help you a lot in the future. You understand about different lifestyles around the world because of the good work you do in sponsoring a pupil in India.

You make good progress in lessons, and you reach the expected levels in most of your work. You enjoy learning because your teachers give you interesting things to do. We think some of you could do better in mathematics and science, and that it would help if teachers more often gave some groups different tasks. You know how well you are doing and what your targets are, but teachers do not always give you enough information to help you know what to do next to improve your work. Your teachers and other adults take very good care of you. They help you to settle in well, and to prepare those of you who will soon be moving on to secondary school.

The headteachers, staff and the governors are all working hard to make the school even better. To help them do this, we have asked them to help you do even better, especially in mathematics and science, by making sure the teachers:

- share all their best ideas about what works well in lessons
- give you enough detailed help when they mark your work so you know what to do next to improve it
- make sure that the work you do in lessons always gives all of you the best chance to do well.

We wish you all the very best for the future!

Yours sincerely

Robin Gaff

Lead inspector

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