

Leas Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122441
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340148
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Briggs
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Atkins
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2007
School address	Ley Lane Mansfield Woodhouse Mansfield
Telephone number	01623 477629
Fax number	01623 477631
Email address	head@leaspark.notts.sch.uk

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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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four inspectors. They visited 18 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information, policies and procedures (particularly related to safeguarding matters), minutes of the governing body, information concerning recent monitoring activities and curriculum planning documents. They also looked at information relating to the care of pupils with additional needs. Inspection questionnaires were received from 102 parents, 99 pupils and four staff.

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

- whether all groups of pupils and, in particular, girls, more able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve as well as they can
- if the personal development of the pupils is well promoted in all key areas
- whether staff use assessment information to provide interesting and challenging activities to meet the needs of all pupils and, in particular, the girls
- if the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school is sufficiently rigorous to identify areas for further improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized school. Fewer pupils are entitled to free school meals than seen nationally. There is only a very small number who are not of White British heritage and none at the early stages of learning English. Very few pupils move in and out of the school other than at the usual time. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school holds the Healthy Schools Gold and Activemark awards.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a school that provides a satisfactory quality of education. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the number of good features, especially in the pupils' personal development and their pastoral care. The headteacher provides good leadership and there is a growing sense of the school working as a team to realise the vision for further improvement. With recent appointments to the senior leadership team and new staff, the school, and most parents, are confident that they can move forward together. However, some of the changes that have been made are too recent to have had time to demonstrate their full impact and so show evidence of acceleration in the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils start school with above average skills and the standards they reach at the end of Year 6 are above average. This helps pupils prepare well for their future. They make satisfactory progress overall but this is somewhat variable. Boys generally do well but national tests and inspection observations show that girls are often very quiet and passive in lessons. Some rarely offer their ideas and they do not generally do as well as the boys. Pupils attain well in English but standards, particularly for the girls, are lower in mathematics. This is at least in part because of their more limited confidence in solving mathematical problems. Most pupils behave well and know how to keep themselves and their friends safe. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and attendance is above average. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils put into practice their awareness of right and wrong.

Progress is satisfactory rather than better because teachers do not always plan activities that are challenging enough. They sometimes spend too long introducing or explaining in lessons at the expense of pupils discussing their ideas or working together. There are good enrichment opportunities but the core curriculum, especially in mathematics, lacks impact to motivate all pupils to the maximum. Pupils are well looked after and feel happy and secure in school.

Senior staff are embedding ambition and driving school improvement but the impact of some initiatives is still variable. The inspection questionnaire identified that several parents are unhappy with aspects of provision for their children and some voiced worries about bullying. Inspectors did not find any evidence of bullying but accept that parents' perceptions of this and of their children's progress need to be more effectively dealt with by the school.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of the girls by
 - making sure that all mathematical activities are interesting and challenging
 - ensuring that all pupils are fully and actively involved in discussions and the whole range of activities.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good by
 - using assessment information to provide activities that have a consistently good level of challenge for all
 - ensuring pupils move into group or individual tasks more speedily.
- Work more closely with parents to ease their concerns and to inform and involve them in the life and work of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Many read well, explain what they think in discussions and write their ideas in grammatically accurate sentences and with growing skill. There has been a steady rise in attainment since 2007 in most subjects. Current standards in Year 6 are above average, but they are better in English than in mathematics. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress. Although, for some, progress is good, this is not consistent across the school. Boys generally achieve better than girls, particularly at the higher levels and especially in mathematics. Across the school, some pupils, and especially girls, make insufficient effort to offer their ideas and sit passively in discussions. Pupils usually handle numbers reasonably well but, when presented with new activities or something that requires them to solve problems, quite a number lack confidence which affects their progress. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with learning or behavioural difficulties, make satisfactory progress.

Pupils have positive attitudes to school, as summed up by one who states, 'I've learned a lot from this school and I'm eager to work well.' Behaviour is good. While some parents, especially of pupils in Year 3, are concerned about bullying, pupils say they feel safe and happy in school and inspectors found no evidence to the contrary. Pupils' moral and social development is key to understanding the needs of others. The school recognises it has to work hard to extend pupils' cultural experiences, living in a largely mono-cultural area. Pupils explain how to lead a healthy lifestyle, knowing that the good quality school dinners and exercise help them to be fit and active, although packed lunches do not always reflect their understanding of how to eat healthily. Pupils make a sound contribution to the school community, including through the work of the school council and taking on other responsibilities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and with a growing proportion that is better, including some that is outstanding. Where teaching is most effective, staff make particularly good use of assessment information to challenge all groups of pupils. In these lessons, time is used well and pupils have plenty of opportunity to produce good quality work. However, there is still a considerable number of lessons where pupils are inactive and have to listen to staff for too long. This affects their concentration; some become very passive listeners and, because time is then limited, do not produce the depth and quality of work that they could. Staff do not always plan enough activities to involve pupils in their own learning through discussions. The school has suitable procedures to track the progress pupils make and senior staff use this information well to identify where further support may be needed. However, this assessment information is not so well used by all staff in planning day-to-day activities.

The school is working to develop links between different subjects to interest and motivate the pupils. In discussions, pupils say they particularly like the opportunities they have to visit places of educational interest. The Enjoying Life Skills Afternoons (ELSA) activities, including cycling safety, cooking and gardening, enable pupils to learn skills that help to prepare for their future and develop as well rounded young people. The school looks after the pupils well. As one younger pupil explained, '....my school is a great school because the people and teachers help me also people are kind.' The staff

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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are aware that when pupils transfer at the start of Year 3 some are concerned about the move to a much bigger school than they were in previously. In their response to the inspection questionnaire and in discussions, the large majority of pupils say they feel happy and well cared for. Pastoral care is good and all staff, including those who help to supervise lunchtime activities, speak to the pupils politely and with due respect. Those pupils with additional needs are supported well, which enables them to make satisfactory progress towards their targets.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher plays a key role in leading the school forward. She has a clear vision for the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher in embedding ambition across the staff team. With recent and imminent changes to core subject leader roles and upper and lower school leaders, the school is making progress towards ensuring the senior leadership team is well placed to drive school improvement further forward. Evaluations of the effectiveness of teaching and learning are accurate, although feedback has not had sufficient impact on addressing the issue of variation in the quality of planning and teaching. Governance of the school is largely satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school although somewhat dependent on staff for information. The programme of meetings and focussed visits by governors to find out more about the work of the school is not extensive and therefore limits the development of their role in challenging school leaders.

There are good procedures to check the suitability of those who help in school and to ensure pupils are cared for and kept safe. Links with parents are satisfactory. There are satisfactory links with the feeder infant school and the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, although at times does not give a high enough priority to provision for girls. As part of its contribution to promoting community cohesion, the school is working to broaden pupils' awareness of the world beyond their local environment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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	
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents are pleased with most aspects of the work of the school. Many believe their children are kept safe and are happy in Leas Park. A comment made that 'the school head and staff are very helpful and always make time' is echoed by many. The school provides a reasonable range of information for parents, including when their children transfer to the school. However, a number of parents have concerns about behaviour and bullying, believing that, as several note, 'Things are swept under the carpet.' In discussion with the pupils, and staff in a variety of roles, inspectors found no evidence of bullying. Nevertheless, inspectors accept that the school could do more to reassure parents and address their concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Leas Park Juniors 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 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 267 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	42	51	50	6	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	50	49	47	46	3	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	29	55	54	11	11	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	31	51	50	11	11	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	37	36	49	48	9	9	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	30	51	50	11	11	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	31	61	60	4	4	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)	32	32	51	50	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	29	55	54	7	7	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	26	59	58	8	8	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	21	58	57	10	10	6	6
The school is led and managed effectively	37	36	45	44	10	10	6	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	41	40	41	12	12	4	4

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.



19 October 2009

Dear pupils

Inspection of Leas Park Junior School, Mansfield, NG19 8LD

Thank you very much for looking after the inspection team when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed meeting you in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and during assembly. We also enjoyed talking to some of you on the school council. I would like to share with you some of the things we found out while we were in Leas Park.

We believe that your school provides you with a satisfactory education and there are a growing number of things that are good. The standards you reach are good and you all learn a lot in different subjects. This helps you prepare well for secondary school and the future. We were very pleased to see that your behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. You clearly understand what is right and wrong. You work very well together, know how to keep safe and understand the importance of exercise and a healthy diet.

We think there are a few things the school could do even better. Most of you make satisfactory progress. But, we think that some of you, and especially the girls, need to join in discussions more and could make better progress, particularly in mathematics. We would like the teachers to make sure that lessons are not too easy or too hard for you and that you do not spend as long sitting on the carpet listening to adults explain things. Finally, we would like the school to work more closely with your parents so that they know more about what you are doing and feel happier about how the school responds to their concerns.

All of you can help the school too. Please try to encourage your parents to help you eat healthy packed lunches. We also think some of you could try harder to take part in discussions by putting your hands up more often and explaining what you think. Come on girls, don't be so quiet in class. We know you have lots of exciting ideas! Good luck to you all for the future.

Yours faithfully

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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