

Leesons Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	101633
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	376604
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2012
Lead inspector	Lindsey Diamond

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Humby
Headteacher	Amanda Rush
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 June 2009
School address	Leesons Hill St Paul's Cray Orpington BR5 2GA
Telephone number	01689 602786
Fax number	01689 870844
Email address	admin@leesons.bromley.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lindsey Diamond

Additional inspector

Peter Thrussell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by two additional inspectors. The team observed 15 lessons, taught by 10 teachers, adding up to over six hours of teaching time. Assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes were also observed. Meetings were held with members of the governing body as well as senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's data on attainment, learning and progress for all year groups. The school development plan, self-evaluation documentation, samples of pupils' work, safeguarding policies and documentation, and lesson plans were also scrutinised. The inspection team analysed 111 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and spoke to a number of parents and carers informally. Additionally, 101 questionnaires completed by pupils and 34 completed by staff were analysed.

Information about the school

Leasons is a smaller-than-average primary school. Most pupils attend from the immediate area and are of White British heritage. Approximately five percent of pupils are from Traveller or Romany backgrounds. Children join the Reception class from a range of pre-school provision, a significant number coming from the privately run provision that shares the school site. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. A higher than average proportion of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than the normal entry and exit points. The school runs its own breakfast club, and has an after-school club on-site, run by another provider. The school meets the current floor standards.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. The headteacher sets high expectations and has a clear view of what is needed for improvement. Children settle quickly into the Reception class and their academic needs are met well as they move through the school. As a result, pupils' levels of attainment and the progress that they make have improved markedly since the last inspection.
- The school has significantly developed the role of middle leaders and they play an important role in driving school improvement.
- There has been a successful focus on engaging and involving parents and carers in the life of the school and helping to accelerate the learning of their children from the earliest age.
- The school has effectively focused on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. However, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use and apply these skills across different subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning, behave well in class and around the school, and produce their best work when encouraged to complete tasks independently. These skills are taught well in most lessons, although at times, lessons can be too reliant on teacher-talk rather than the use of open-ended questioning to encourage pupils to think and investigate for themselves or to discuss issues.
- Assessment systems are well developed and are instrumental in ensuring that teachers quickly identify and tackle any incidence of underachievement. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve. The quality of marking as a tool to support learning over time is good but teachers do not consistently make individual pupils aware of the learning expectations within lessons.
- A clear trend of sustained improvement over the last three years, combined with the shared commitment from the school leadership, staff and the governing body to enhance pupil achievement and learning, and to provide a safe learning environment, confirms that the school has strong capacity to improve further.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, improve the consistency in teaching by:
 - further enhancing teacher questioning in lessons
 - providing greater opportunities within lessons for pupils to investigate, think things through themselves or discuss with classmates so that their learning is extended further
 - ensuring that teachers consistently reinforce challenging learning expectations within lessons, and check that they are being achieved.

- Ensure that pupils are consistently provided with opportunities to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills and knowledge across different subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the time they move into Year 1 this gap has narrowed, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils continue to progress well throughout the school so that by the end of Year 6 pupils now reach attainment levels that are broadly average. Some pupils have made outstanding progress from low starting points. This is recognised by pupils, for example when an inspector discussed the progress pupils had made over time, one was keen to point out, 'I am learning quickly.' For some, such as those who have joined the school late and are working hard to close learning gaps, progress is not quite so fast as time is needed to consolidate learning and make sure that it is secure. Parents and carers of these pupils are rightly pleased with the strides in learning their children make. One parent, expressing the views of many, told inspectors that since their child had moved to the school his progress had significantly accelerated. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved significantly, in relation to the national average for their group since the previous inspection, as has the progress of Traveller pupils. Parents and carers of these pupils are equally positive about the pace of learning for their children, one reporting that their child's learning needs had been specifically met and 'continually catered for'.

Pupils develop the necessary skills in reading, writing and mathematics well to help prepare them for the next stage of their education. They have good oral communication skills and are able to apply them well in a range of situations to support learning, in negotiating with their peers and in discussions with adults beyond the classroom. The school has recently focused on improving progress in mathematics and, as a result, all pupils make significantly better progress than their peers nationally. This was evidenced in classrooms, for example in a Year 4 mathematics lesson where pupils were skilled at working quickly with positive and negative numbers, and learning was quickly moved on. Likewise, pupils make good

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progress in reading and are working in line with national averages at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The school is now making the same concerted effort with improving writing standards, and, as a result, progress has been accelerated and standards are consistently improving. The vast majority of parents and carers state that their child achieves well, and their comments reflect evidence seen by inspectors.

Quality of teaching

Most of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires believed their children are taught well, and inspection evidence supports this. Oral communication skills are taught well and pupils work together and collaborate very well when provided with opportunities to do so. Teachers are adept at weaving meaningful opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into lessons, and this adds much to learning experiences and permeates the culture of the school. Typically, teachers have high expectations of learners and push them to achieve as much as they can by being active partners in their own learning. There are occasions, however, when teacher questioning is not incisive or opportunities are missed for pupils to investigate, think through solutions for themselves or to discuss with classmates. Other adults, including parents and carers, are used as an effective resource to support and enhance pupil learning. In lessons observed, learning was most effective when the teachers planned tasks to accurately match the learning needs of pupils, and moved learning on at a fast pace to ensure that pupils remained engaged and focused. When this happened, progress was good and at times, outstanding. This was evident when a teaching assistant was helping Reception class children to learn their letter sounds. She incorporated movement, drama and carefully targeted questions to ensure that all children remained engaged and were challenged at their own level.

The pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum that helps pupils build up key reading, writing and mathematical skills in a progressive and systematic manner. These skills are not always reinforced at every opportunity in different subjects of the curriculum. During the inspection, it was apparent that teachers have a very clear understanding of the achievement of individual pupils. These accurate assessments are mostly used effectively to guide and inform lesson planning so that tasks set are appropriately challenging. Marking is used effectively as a tool for improving the quality of individual pupils' work. However, these areas for improvement are not always sufficiently reinforced by teachers during lessons. Homework is set throughout the school and contributes well to the learning of pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Discussions with parents and pupils, as well as pupil questionnaires, confirm the inspection findings that behaviour and safety is typically good. Pupils report that they feel safe at school and that behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. However, there were a small number of parental concerns about bullying and this was followed up in detail by the inspection team. The behaviour log and playground incident log were investigated and discussions took place with pupils.

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The logs showed that incidents were minor and appropriately dealt with. Rare playground injuries are likewise dealt with appropriately by staff. No pupils were able to cite any examples of bullying of any kind and no inappropriate behaviour was seen by the team. During the inspection, pupils were typically extremely polite and courteous, and engaged well in learning. Just occasionally, pupils became less focused when the pace of teaching dropped, although they always conducted themselves in line with the generally high teacher expectations. Attendance and punctuality are showing sustained improvement over time, helped by innovations such as breakfast club and inviting parents and carers into the classroom. It is now above average for many groups. Pupils show a good understanding of the risks associated with, for example, substance misuse, the use of new technology and cyberbullying. The school has been proactive in encouraging pupils to discuss their views on crime and its impact. As part of this, pupils have made a film about knife crime, which is now integrated into the curriculum.

Leadership and management

The headteacher demonstrates an ambitious vision for school improvement. She has worked effectively with senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body, who all share this vision, to ensure that this successful school continues to improve and to accelerate the progress for all pupils, especially in reading and mathematics. The development of an extended leadership team has ensured that middle managers have a proactive and effective role in whole-school improvement and as leaders of learning. Assessment systems for evaluating pupil achievement are fully in place and they are having considerable impact on improving progress for all learners because any underachievement is quickly identified and addressed. This clear vision for the future, combined with good progress to date in improving teaching, achievement and behaviour, and further well-targeted action plans, demonstrate a clear capacity to improve still further.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. All the requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. The school has effectively invested much time and effort in engaging parents and carers and, as a result, has ensured that they are key partners in their children's learning. The curriculum is good and is very well matched to the needs of learners as well as their interests. To help prepare them for secondary school and the wider world, work experience is built into the Year 6 curriculum through working with different school staff and attending meetings with the headteacher and governors. Staff members recognise and value the efforts that are being made to continually improve opportunities for pupils. As one teacher said, reflecting the views of many, 'It has been a privilege to be part of a team that has made such efforts to improve the school', while another noted that the leadership is 'proactive in supporting staff, pupils and parents'. Spiritual, moral and cultural development is a key feature of school life, and pupils develop strong moral and social awareness and an appreciation of the views and beliefs of others. These features help to create a cohesive school community.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



6 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leasons Primary School, Orpington BR5 2GA

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers, and observing the lessons, assemblies, lunchtimes and play-times. We also carefully read your opinions put forward in the pupil questionnaires. We found that your school is good, and that your headteacher, other leaders and your teachers are determined to make it even better.

These are the things we found that your school does well.

- Your headteacher, staff and governors are very clear about how they want to keep improving your school.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception class and then progress well throughout the school.
- Your school has worked hard to involve parents and carers in your learning and this has really helped you make good progress.
- The school assesses your learning needs very carefully so that you quickly get help when you need it.
- The curriculum is interesting and fun, and is well targeted to suit your learning needs.
- Communication skills are taught well and you use them effectively at work and at play.
- The school has good systems in place to keep you safe.

We agree with your headteacher that your school could be even better and have asked her to do two important things.

- Make sure that teachers always give you plenty of opportunity to discuss your learning or to investigate and think things through for yourselves in lessons.
- Regularly plan opportunities for you to use your reading, writing and mathematics skills more widely in different subjects of the curriculum.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Lindsey Diamond
Lead inspector

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