

# Lawford Mead Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115001
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	357668
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Hill

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	142
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Francesca Poelman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dawn Baker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Trent Road Chelmsford CM1 2JH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 354134
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed, taught by five teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' books and a variety of documentation. They examined, in particular, documents that related to pupils' progress, keeping them safe, and their personal development. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and 83 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

The progress pupils are currently making in English, particularly boys and higher attaining pupils.

- The consistency of teaching and learning in different classes and subjects was checked.
- The effectiveness of the school's monitoring of its success, and particularly the part played in this by subject leaders.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school which currently has five mixed-age classes. The large majority of pupils are White British, with small numbers of pupils from a variety of different minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. A high proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Ten pupils have statements of special educational needs, a very large number for a school of this size. Pupils' needs include moderate learning difficulties and autism. A substantial number have behavioural and emotional problems, or severe difficulties in sustaining concentration. The school frequently admits pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities mid-way through their junior years.

After the last inspection, there was considerable staffing disruption in the school until about a year ago. A new headteacher, who was previously the deputy at the school, took up post in January 2011. The school has recently reached level one of the International Schools award. A breakfast club, managed by the governing body, is provided each morning for pupils from this school and from the adjacent infant school.

**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

The school provides a good education for all its pupils, enabling them to achieve well. Underpinning all its success is the exceptionally good provision for care, guidance and support, which means that the school is a happy, harmonious community where pupils get on well together and enjoy learning. The school provides particularly well for pupils with emotional or behavioural problems, or those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. It makes excellent use of outside agencies, and its own skilled staff, to ensure that these pupils feel safe and secure in school. As a result, they make great strides in their personal development, and hence are able to progress well academically. A Year 6 pupil summed up many of the school's strengths by saying, 'This is a kind school.' and it is noticeable how tolerant and kind pupils are to their classmates, including those who struggle with their work, or who find it hard to concentrate or behave.

Results of national tests and the school's own detailed record-keeping show that progress and standards have varied considerably since the last inspection, during a period of considerable disruption to teaching. Results, most recently in English, had not been as good as expected, particularly for the more able. For too long, many pupils made insufficient progress, and their standards were weak in the light of their average starting points in Year 3. Over the last year, however, with more stable teaching, learning accelerated. Pupils made good progress last year, particularly those in Years 5 and 6 who had previously fallen behind in their learning. Higher attaining pupils made very good progress, including in English. Standards are improving but remain average, as some lost ground still needs to be made up in the older classes, who have a legacy of underachievement from the past. This is particularly true in writing, where progress, whilst good, is not as strong as in reading and mathematics, and standards are lower. The school has identified this issue and has introduced a range of strategies since September to enhance the teaching and learning of writing. Early indications are that these are starting to accelerate pupils' progress.

Teaching is good with major strengths in classroom management, and the use of assessment to provide work that is matched to different pupils' varying needs. Most lessons are fast-paced but, occasionally, the pace slackens so learning is just satisfactory. The use of skilled teaching assistants is particularly effective in promoting the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, through challenging them to achieve their best and developing their independence. All staff show great skill in dealing firmly but sensitively with pupils who struggle to conform to accepted standards of behaviour. This means that behaviour is good, and poor behaviour very seldom disrupts the learning of others. A few inconsistencies remain in teaching, but these have been identified by senior staff and are being addressed.

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The school promotes community cohesion extremely well within the school and locally, but too little is in place further afield. All pupils, regardless of background or ability, get on well together and learn common values. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. They benefit from a wide-ranging curriculum which successfully helps them understand a variety of different cultures, religions and countries around the world. However, they have very few opportunities to interact more directly with contrasting communities in this country, beyond the immediate locality. A link with a school in Tanzania has proved difficult to sustain, but the school is working to set up a more substantial link through the International Schools project.

The school's self-evaluation is good. Regular monitoring of lessons and careful tracking of pupils' progress mean that issues are identified accurately and addressed well. Subject leaders play a much fuller part in this than at the last inspection, and the good teamwork between staff drives improvements well. This, along with the great strides made in improving teaching, attendance and pupils' progress over the last year and the shared vision of all staff, mean the school's capacity to improve is good.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, by
  - consolidating the improvements made last year in pupils' progress to help them make up any remaining shortfall in their learning
  - fully implementing and embedding the initiatives started this year to promote writing, and evaluating their effectiveness
  - improving the consistency with which teachers use marking to show pupils how to improve, maintain a good pace in lessons, and take opportunities to use paired discussion to enhance pupils' learning.
- Extend the work done to promote community cohesion locally by
  - making more substantial links with contrasting communities in the United Kingdom
  - increasing the links with communities abroad begun through the International Schools project.

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

<b>2</b>
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Standards of attainment of pupils who start at the school in Year 3 vary considerably but are average overall. However, the picture of progress and standards across the school is distorted by the relatively large number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who join the school at later junctures. This means that the effective attainment on entry is lower than average. Over the last three years, standards at the end of Year 6 varied between above average and below average, and were average overall.

Boys and girls make similarly good progress in lessons and achieve well. Those who have special educational need and/or disabilities do well in the light of their starting points because they have work that is tailored to their individual needs, and receive the right balance of challenge and help from both teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to succeed. In a short session on spelling, pupils

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in Years 3 and 4 concentrated well, made outstanding progress, and took a delight in their success. They welcome new experiences, as was seen when pupils from Years 4 and 5 enthusiastically acted out parts of a Hindu ceremony, contributing their ideas sensibly and asking thoughtful questions. Pupils tackle difficult ideas maturely, as was seen in an excellent lesson with Years 5 and 6 about gender stereotyping. Working in groups, they put forward their views confidently, listened respectfully to each other's opinions, and worked well together to reach a consensus.

Relationships are good between boys and girls from different backgrounds regardless of ability. They enjoy school, and attendance has been rising steadily. Pupils who come to the breakfast club enjoy the activities, the chance to chat, and to eat a hearty breakfast. They are kind and considerate to the infant pupils who attend. Pupils feel safe in school, and are knowledgeable about how to ensure their own safety. They have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy, including the value of a balanced diet and the dangers of smoking and alcohol, and they are keen on exercise. They contribute well to the community through the school council, the many responsibilities they undertake, and their positive attitudes to each other. Their good progress, keenness to learn, and their good collaborative skills prepare them well for their future lives, in school and beyond.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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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## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good, although some inconsistencies in practice remain. Teachers explain things well, often using the interactive whiteboards to illustrate and clarify ideas, so pupils make good progress in their understanding. Teachers build on the very good relationships they establish with pupils to ensure that classes are managed well, and a positive working ethos is maintained. Assessment is used effectively to plan work that matches pupils' needs. Teachers generally keep a careful track of individuals' progress during lessons, so that any misunderstandings are quickly identified and addressed, although occasionally they miss the slower progress of a few pupils. A major strength of many lessons is the way teachers involve all pupils actively through well-judged opportunities to discuss their work in pairs and sort out their ideas, although sometimes chances to do this are missed. The regular use of small whiteboards for pupils to write their ideas on is very successful in ensuring their attention and giving the teacher feedback on their progress. The written marking of pupils' work is done conscientiously, but is variable in the extent to which it shows them how they can do better in future.

Pupils' learning and enjoyment are enhanced by a curriculum that gives them interesting opportunities to learn practically and actively. It is adapted well to pupils needs. There are good links between different subjects, for example in Years 4 and 5, skills in French, mathematics, and information and communication technology are developed together in a meaningful way. There is a strong programme of personal and social education which supports personal development well. Enrichment is good through visits, visitors, a good range of clubs and such extras as Mucky Hands, which provides outdoor education and generates huge enthusiasm. The breakfast club makes a positive contribution to the enjoyment and well-being of pupils who attend.

The strong care provided to pupils is embedded throughout the school's daily life in lessons and assemblies, when positive values, respect for others and good relationships are continually reinforced. Exceptionally good use is made of outside agencies to support pupils with particular pastoral needs. The care for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is outstanding. For example, several have the opportunity to attend the school's 'nurture group' four afternoons a week to develop their confidence and self-esteem alongside their academic skills. There is high engagement of parents and carers, and a variety of extra support, such as music therapy or counselling, arranged in collaboration with the Kids Inspire charity. Pupils themselves make a strong contribution in the way they help and support classmates who are having problems.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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## How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders and managers have worked successfully in the last year to ensure that teaching is good and consequently eliminate unevenness in progress. There is a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses, based on effective use of well-organised evaluation systems. The change of headteacher has been seamless. The outstanding pastoral care at the last inspection has been maintained and enhanced. Senior staff and subject leaders are fully involved in evaluating success, and provide clear guidance and direction to colleagues. All work as an effective team.

The good effectiveness of the governing body rests on secure systems that give it an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, so it can both support developments and hold staff to account for the school's performance. The governing body contributes well to the good safeguarding systems, obtaining and acting upon parents' and carers' views. The extensive work to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable contributes greatly to their safety and well-being.

The school works well in partnership with parents and carers, giving them good information and involving them effectively to help their children learn. Other partnerships make a good contribution to enhancing the curriculum, including the sports partnership, and the link with other schools through the local delivery group. The use of outside agencies to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is excellent. The schools' great knowledge of individuals' needs, and the effective work to address them, means that all are given equal opportunities to succeed. Community cohesion is very strong within the school, but links to the wider world are at an early stage of development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

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## **Views of parents and carers**

The proportion of questionnaires returned was above average. They showed that the large majority of parents and carers strongly support the school and appreciate what it does for their children. They particularly appreciate the good teaching, the good information they get about their children's progress, and the way their children are kept safe. A few parents and carers had concerns about the way poor behaviour is dealt with or the way the school meets their children's particular needs. Inspectors observed almost uniformly good behaviour in lessons, in assembly and in the playground. When pupils who find it difficult to conform did misbehave, this was handled well by staff, so that the learning of others was not disrupted. In conversation, pupils expressed the view that, although sometimes a few of their classmates misbehaved, the adults dealt with it quickly using the well-understood systems of sanctions and rewards. Inspection evidence shows that the systems the school has in place to meet the particular needs of pupils are of a good quality.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lawford Mead Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 142 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	48	36	43	7	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	54	36	43	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	46	55	36	43	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	46	38	46	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	57	31	37	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	46	38	46	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	48	40	48	3	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)	38	46	39	47	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	46	35	42	8	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	31	39	47	11	13	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	37	42	51	6	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	54	32	39	6	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	52	36	43	3	4	1	1

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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



9 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Lawford Mead Junior School, Chelmsford, CM1 2JH**

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and listening to your views. You told us that you enjoyed school, and it was clear why. We were particularly pleased to see that your behaviour was good, and that you all got on really well together.

Your school is providing you with a good education. You get lots of interesting things to do, and you particularly enjoy the extras, such as sport clubs and the Mucky Hands activities. You are making good progress because the teachers and other adults are good at helping you to learn. Some older pupils did not make enough progress in the past, but in the last year you have caught up a lot. You do not do quite as well in writing as you do in reading and mathematics, and I have agreed with your teachers that they are going to keep concentrating on helping you improve this. You can help by keeping up your hard work and good behaviour in class, and by trying particularly hard when you are writing. I know that you enjoy learning about different people around the world, and enjoyed the contact you made with a school in Tanzania. You don't have enough chances like this to contact people beyond Chelmsford. I have agreed with the school that they are going to provide lots more opportunities for you to get in touch with different communities in this country and around the world.

The school is particularly good at looking after you and making sure that if anyone needs any extra help, they get it. The adults are good at organising the school and are keen for it to get even better. I am sure that you will help them with this.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Lead inspector

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