

INSPECTION REPORT

LEIGH BECK JUNIOR SCHOOL

Canvey Island

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115054

Headteacher: Mr R F Porter

Reporting inspector: Mr John Eadie
20191

Dates of inspection: 15 – 16 January 2002

Inspection number: 194660

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Point Road Canvey Island Essex
Postcode:	SS8 7TD
Telephone number:	01268 683037
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Hart
Date of previous inspection:	12 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Leigh Beck Junior School is situated on Canvey Island, on the Essex bank of the Thames Estuary. There are 459 pupils between the ages of seven and eleven. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. There is a small number of pupils from a range of other cultural backgrounds, but all of these have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is broadly average. Seven pupils have statements of special need, which is about the number one would expect to find in a school of this size. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. Generally, the pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds, although there is some significant deprivation on Canvey Island. Attainment on entry to the school is generally below the national average. At the time of the inspection illness was having a significant impact on the staff of the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Leigh Beck Junior School is a very good school. Pupils achieve well, reaching above average standards in the National Curriculum tests in 2001. This is largely due to the good quality teaching that they are enjoying. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils are reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science and make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and the pupils consequently learn well.
- The quality of leadership and management is excellent.
- There is a very good range of learning opportunities and teachers use links between subjects particularly well.
- The teachers keep very clear records of the pupils' progress and their achievements.
- The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The pupils' attitudes to the school and their personal development are very good. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. Behaviour is good.

What could be improved

- Work set in some mathematics lessons is not always relevant for pupils of all ability levels.
- The teachers' confidence in teaching information and communication technology.
- The teaching of science is insufficiently interesting and exciting.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

These areas for improvement should be read in the context of this being a very good school; they do not represent weaknesses, rather they are pointers to refine the very good practice that already exists.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997 and has made very good progress since then. All but one of the key issues from that report have been dealt with excellently. Three of the five issues concerned management and these have all been very effectively addressed. For example, the School Development Plan is now an extremely clear document giving excellent indication of how the school is planning to

improve. The issue regarding relationships with the parents has also been very effectively tackled as the parents now have more positive views of the school. Although work has been done on the final issue, regarding the teachers' confidence in science, information and communication technology and design and technology, this work has not been completed and improvements could still be made. Standards in the National Curriculum tests have also risen significantly in the time since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	B	B
Mathematics	C	C	B	B
Science	B	B	B	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows improvements in standards in recent years, particularly in English and mathematics. When the results for 2001 are compared with the results that the same pupils achieved in the tests for seven year olds four years previously, they show that they have made good progress, particularly in mathematics. Appropriate targets were set for the pupils' performance in these tests and they were exceeded in 2001. The findings of the inspection are that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. The pupils achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very good attitudes to their work and enjoy coming to school. They work enthusiastically.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class and around the school is good. Two pupils were excluded last year, but these were the first for many years.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. They are developing into mature and responsible young citizens. They show caring attitudes to each other, ensuring all are included in the life of the school.
Attendance	Rates of attendance have been improving in recent years and have just reached the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In a number of lessons it is very good or excellent. The teachers teach the skills of literacy and numeracy well, often reinforcing these skills in lessons in other subjects. All pupils are fully included in lessons and the teachers ensure that they meet the needs of all groups of pupils well. One reason for this is that the teachers have very good records of what the pupils have achieved and use them very well to set clear targets for their progress. The teachers generally manage their classes very well, creating an orderly working environment in which it is easy for the pupils to learn. This results in pupils in most lessons working hard and concentrating for long periods. Planning is very good, largely due to the effectiveness of the year group teams, which ensures that all teachers have clear objectives for what it is that they expect their pupils to learn. These objectives are almost always shared with the pupils, and returned to at the end of lessons so that the pupils have a very good knowledge of what they have learnt. Homework is used very effectively to support what is being learnt in class. There are some areas for development in teaching. In mathematics lessons, the teachers do not always provide appropriate work for the range of ability levels in their sets. The teachers do not always provide practical work to retain the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils in science. Although the teachers now have adequate knowledge to teach information and communication technology, there are still occasions when their lack of training in this subject slows the pupils' learning. This is largely because developments in this subject have only started recently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The teachers often make very good links between subjects so that the pupils can see the relevance of what it is that they are learning. This ensures that the pupils enjoy a wide range of curricular opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. Clear individual education plans are prepared for these pupils, who are well supported in class by their teachers, learning assistants, the special educational needs coordinator and outside agencies. This support ensures that these pupils are included in all aspects of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the pupils' personal development is good overall. It is particularly good for their social and moral development and provision for their cultural development has improved since the time of the last inspection when there were some shortcomings.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils, ensuring that they are safe and confident. Assessment procedures are very thorough and are used well to guide curricular planning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	All aspects of leadership and management within the school are excellent. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction, most ably supported by his deputy and the other management teams within the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They play a full part in the strategic management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance excellently. Not only is very good analysis carried out of what is happening but action plans for development are promptly and thoroughly produced.
The strategic use of resources	All resources available to the school are used very effectively and the school applies the principles of best value excellently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has high expectations of their children. • Their children are making good progress. • Behaviour in the school is good. • Their children like school. • The teaching is good. • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how their children are progressing. • Levels of homework.

As will be seen from earlier sections of this report, the inspection team endorses all positive parental comments. However, the judgements of the team are that parents have good opportunities to receive information about how their children are progressing and that homework makes a very good contribution to the pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science and make good progress.

- 1 The results in the National Curriculum tests for 2001 show the pupils to be achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is the case both when compared to all schools nationally and when compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The judgements of the inspection team found that these standards are being maintained.
- 2 When the results of the pupils who took the tests in 2001 are compared with the scores that they achieved in the National Curriculum tests for seven year olds four years previously, it can be seen that they have made good progress. For example, these pupils were generally achieving average scores in reading and writing four years earlier. They have progressed particularly well in mathematics, as they were below average in this subject in the National Curriculum tests for seven year olds four years previously.
- 3 The school has also carried out some detailed analysis of the results of the National Curriculum tests in recent years. This shows that the pupils who completed all four years in the school made particularly good progress and performed even better than those who joined later. This is partly due to the targets set for the pupils' progress, as the school aims to help them progress some 30 per cent faster than the expected rate.

The quality of teaching is good and the pupils consequently learn well.

- 4 The quality of teaching is good overall and results in good learning by the pupils and their good levels of achievement during their time in the school. These good levels of progress are shown by the very careful records kept by the school. These show that pupils generally come into the school with below average levels of attainment and leave with above average levels.
- 5 During the inspection one lesson in five was very good or better and nearly two lessons in five were good. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory. A particular strength of the teaching is the teachers' planning. This is largely due to the very effective year group teams, who plan together and ensure that there is no duplication of effort. This consistency in planning ensures that there are clear objectives for the pupils' learning and it is common practice for the teachers to share these objectives with their pupils. This was exemplified in a lesson observed with a temporary teacher, who was, very politely, asked by a pupil what the objective for the lesson was. Although she had shared the objective with them, this pupil wanted clarification. These objectives are almost always reviewed at the end of the lesson, which gives the pupils very good knowledge of their own learning.
- 6 A further general strength of the teaching is the teachers' management of their classes. They create an orderly working environment in which the pupils find it easy to learn. The pupils respond by working hard and showing high levels of concentration and interest in their work. This was the case in most lessons observed during the inspection, in many of which there was an excited buzz of endeavour while the pupils were working. The teachers are very good at including all pupils in their lessons. They ensure that the needs of all are met well. The teachers also make very good use of homework to reinforce the pupils' learning. For example in a science lesson the pupils had completed

some very effective homework which had supported their learning on materials. This homework was displayed on a board entitled "Excellent homework", so raising the self-esteem of the pupils, and their enthusiasm for completing this extra work.

The quality of leadership and management is excellent.

- 7 The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. An experienced and hardworking deputy very ably supports him. Between them they lead a number of very effective management teams within the school, which have given the school considerable impetus in moving forward. Not the least of these is the senior management team who very effectively take on much responsibility in the strategic development of the school. The school has also set up a team of year group coordinators who add an extra level of management. They ensure that year groups work as teams, their own team providing a very valuable and effective link between the year groups and an overview of the curriculum, for example.
- 8 The governing body is very well organised and has a number of effective and hardworking committees. They have good knowledge of their role and play a full part in supporting the management of the school. The school is particularly good at evaluating aspects of its performance and acting on this evaluation. An excellent example of this is the paper produced in response to the recently published 2001 National Curriculum test statistics. This document not only gives detailed analysis of the figures, but clear indication of perceived areas for development and how they are to be addressed, who is to be responsible and what success criteria are to be used.
- 9 A further excellent feature of management is the school development plan. This document, which has developed considerably since the last inspection when it had deficiencies, provides a very clear vision of where the school is going. It contains detailed evidence of evaluation, along with extremely clear indication of cost implications, areas of responsibility, how the success of measures is to be evaluated and when projects are planned to be completed. The support given to staff is linked to this development plan and is excellent. Relevant training is provided to all employees, and all are involved in professional development. The support provided for staff new to the school is exemplary and is being used as a model in training in other organisations.

There is a very good range of learning opportunities and teachers use links between subjects particularly well.

- 10 The school provides a particularly broad range of learning opportunities for the pupils. One of the key aspects of this provision is the links between subjects that are made at every opportunity. There were a number of examples of this observed during the inspection. For example, in a design and technology lesson where the pupils were challenged to raise a book from the table without using their hands, clear links were made with their work on forces in science. The skills of literacy and numeracy are often incorporated into lessons in other subjects. For example, in a science lesson very good use was made of correct scientific and mathematical vocabulary with reference to their work in literacy. Information and communication technology is used well as a tool in other subjects. Work was seen in geography, where the pupils had researched rivers of the world using the Internet. They were then using the computers to present their research in the form of Web pages. The curriculum for subjects other than those tested annually is also very good. For example, some very good work in art was seen around the school during the inspection.
- 11 Curriculum planning is of a very high quality. This is largely due to the very effective year

group coordinators who oversee the planning for 'their' year groups and meet together regularly to ensure that the planned curriculum is progressive through the school. The particular expertise of various members of staff is used well to ensure that the quality of planning is maintained. The curriculum is planned to ensure that all pupils are able to be included in all aspects of the work of their classes.

The teachers keep very clear records of the pupils' progress and their achievements.

- 12 There is a whole-school system for assessment which ensures that very clear records are kept of the pupils' attainment. This enables the teachers to measure the progress of the pupils accurately. These records have developed well and are now manageable and used well to monitor the pupils' progress and to plan for the next stage in their learning. Excellent analysis is carried out of the results achieved in the National Curriculum tests and is used to plan for developments in English, mathematics and science. This analysis showed some specific differences in performance between boys and girls a couple of years ago, which the school promptly addressed with the result that boys are now achieving in line with girls.
- 13 The assessments carried out and recorded by the teachers are used very successfully to set targets for improvement for the pupils. In some classes the setting of these targets is enhanced by the use of an excellent commercially available scheme. Where these are used the pupils know exactly what they need to work on and when they have achieved their next goal. This further enhances their learning.

The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good.

- 14 Ensuring that the pupils with special educational needs are enabled to make good progress is a high priority in the school. All pupils are assessed when they enter the school to see if there is any cause for concern. If there is a need, very clear and detailed individual education plans are created. The teachers have a summary and profile of these individual education plans readily to hand in lessons so they can ensure that they are addressing the specific targets identified. They are very ably supported by the very competent and well-qualified coordinator for special educational needs, as well as by a team of qualified support assistants, who between them have a variety of specialisms. The school also gets very good support from outside agencies who are involved in training for staff and diagnosis of pupils' problems as well as in day to day support. Individual education plans are very regularly reviewed to see how effectively targets are being met.
- 15 All staff are given regular training in the needs of these pupils and, as well as this, the team of support assistants meet regularly with the coordinator for special educational needs to discuss and review the progress made by the pupils with special educational needs. Good information is provided for parents of pupils with special educational needs, both in terms of personal contact with the coordinator and their children's teachers, and in an informative and helpful booklet that has been produced. The school is used as a model of practice for special educational needs by the Local Education Authority.

The pupils' attitudes to the school and their personal development are very good. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. Behaviour is good.

- 16 The pupils enjoy coming to school and are generally enthusiastic in lessons. The school

makes good provision for the pupils' personal development and the pupils become responsible in their actions and in their dealings with others. The pupils' attitudes to their school are exemplified by comments made by some Year 6 pupils who were interviewed during the inspection. They said that they would recommend the school as it is clear what they have to learn in lessons, behaviour is very good, teaching is good and the teachers make the lessons fun, they can talk to the teachers and the teachers trust them.

- 17 Relationships are very good at all levels, the relationships between teachers and pupils contributing significantly to the learning environment. There are also very good relationships between pupils and all are therefore included in all aspects of school life. Behaviour is good overall. The vast majority of the pupils is very well aware of the consequences of their actions and makes every effort to live in harmony with their neighbours.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Work set in some mathematics lessons is not always relevant for pupils of all ability levels.

- 18 Work is not always provided in mathematics sets that is appropriate for the range of ability levels of all the pupils. A number of examples of this were observed during the inspection. For example, in Year 4, not only were all pupils in the top set doing the same work, but those in the third set were also doing the same task. This task was far too simple for most of those in the top set who were ready to move on to much more challenging work. The pupils in the third set coped fairly well with this task, but even here there were some who would have benefited from more challenging work and others who needed further practice at simpler work first. In the top set in Year 6 the task provided was quite challenging and at an appropriate level for most of the pupils. However, there were some pupils who quickly mastered the task and needed much higher levels of challenge. Looking at pupils' books in all year groups revealed that these were not isolated incidents.

The teachers' confidence in teaching information and communication technology.

- 19 Although the school is providing training for teachers in the requirements of the curriculum for information and communication technology, this has not been in place for long enough to have been totally successful. For example, lessons were observed where the teacher was competent in teaching the required learning objective. However, when the pupils quickly achieved this, the teacher did not have sufficient expertise to take them on to the next stage in their learning.

The teaching of science is insufficiently interesting and exciting.

- 20 The teachers generally make science interesting and involve the pupils by approaching the topic through experiments. However, in some lessons too much time is spent planning and talking about science, rather than experimenting and discovering. For example, in a lesson in Year 5 on evaporation, the pupils spent almost the entire lesson discussing how to conduct a fair test and the experiment was not started. The pupils' needs were not met as they did not begin the investigation or identify prior knowledge to extend the hypothesis. Further evidence was gained when discussions were held with pupils. Despite their very positive attitudes to their school and to their work, a number said that they didn't enjoy science, some describing the subject as boring.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 21 In order to refine the very good practice already found in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) ensure that the work set in all mathematics sets is appropriate for the abilities of all pupils;
 - (2) continue to provide training so that teachers are more confident in their teaching of information and communication technology;
 - (3) ensure that interesting and exciting practical activities are used as a vehicle for the teaching of science.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	13	15	0	0	0
Percentage	3	17	37	43	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents about three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	459
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	115

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Years 3 to 6

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	62	55	117

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	50	46	60
	Girls	48	40	48
	Total	98	86	108
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (77)	74 (77)	93 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	50	50	61
	Girls	50	47	55
	Total	100	97	116
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (77)	83 (79)	99 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	9
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	448
Any other minority ethnic group	0

The Local Education Authority admission forms do not gather these statistics.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	205

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	3	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	824 404
Total expenditure	806 037
Expenditure per pupil	1 756
Balance brought forward from previous year	19 756
Balance carried forward to next year	38 123

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	457
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	41	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	49	1	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	63	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	55	13	1	0
The teaching is good.	43	53	1	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	65	10	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	39	6	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	28	61	9	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	35	53	4	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	54	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	55	8	4	3

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding