



Levendale Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111566
LEA Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number 278720
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Arthur Allison

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mount Leven Road
School category	Community		Yarm
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		TS15 9RJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 783 684
Number on roll	216	Fax number	01642 783 684
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Judith Coleman
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Jones

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 14 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	Inspection number 278720
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school for children aged 3 to 11. It serves an area of social advantage. Forty percent attend from outside the catchment area. Children's overall attainment on entry to school is broadly average, but language and mathematics skills are lower. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with statements of special educational need and those from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. Very few children have a first language other than English. Recently there have been several changes of teaching staff.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. This judgement matches the school's own accurate assessment of its effectiveness. The key areas for improvement identified by the school match the findings of the inspection. The school is improving. The vast majority of parents have confidence in it. Teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding so all children make good progress. Standards are mostly above average. Where they are not, it is because the children have a lower starting point.

The headteacher has very high expectations of children and staff. She is very perceptive about how well children are achieving and what needs to be done to raise standards further. All staff share the aims of the headteacher and are keen to strengthen their expertise. The children's excellent personal development is a strength of the school. The children enjoy school and want to learn. The school works well with other agencies to support the achievement and well-being of all children. Children with learning difficulties are identified early. These children and the few who are in the early stages of learning English receive good help and support.

The school has successfully resolved the previously identified shortcomings with the exception of standards in writing, which are improving. The school should also continue to implement its teaching, learning and assessment programme in order to match work even better to what children already know. The Foundation Stage is good; teaching is good and children settle very quickly into school. They make good progress and meet expectations by the end of the reception year. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are well informed about the impact of spending decisions. The school gives good value for money and has the capacity to make the identified improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue raising standards in writing.
- Provide an even better match between what children already know and their new work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school correctly judges these to be good. When children start school their overall attainment is broadly average, but in some years it is slightly above and in others it is below average. Language and mathematics skills are the weaker elements. Children enjoy school and make good progress in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. The national test results at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 show that children continue to make good progress, though overall standards may vary from year to year. Children did better in the national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2005 than in 2004. The school sets very challenging targets for children in Year 6. In 2005 these were exceeded in science and almost met in English and mathematics. The main

exception was the percentage of children who achieved the higher Level 5 in English. The target was exceeded for reading, but not met for writing because strategies put in place to provide more opportunities to write for different purposes were only just beginning to raise standards in writing.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are in the early stages of learning English make good progress because they are identified early and given the necessary help. Children who are above average on entry to school also make good progress and most reach levels higher than those expected by the time they leave.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's view of children's good achievement in this area is conservative. Inspectors judge this to be an outstanding feature of school. Children agree they are very happy in school. They participate enthusiastically in what the school has to offer. This is reflected in their consistently very good attendance and punctuality.

Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with moral and social development being very good. Behaviour throughout the school is usually very good or better. This is partly because children are involved in agreeing what the school rules should be. Very good behaviour contributes to the very positive atmosphere in school where children are free from bullying or racial harassment, feel safe, know about healthy life-styles and demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. Children make a very good contribution to decision-making through the school council. Their views are valued highly and this fosters a real sense of belonging to and respect for their school community. Parents support this view; they say it is a 'community in which we all feel we belong'. Older children demonstrate increasingly mature attitudes, particularly in the care they show for the welfare of the youngest children. Children of all ages are proud to take on responsibilities and this prepares them very well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that teaching and learning are good. There is a consistency to teaching throughout the school so all children make good progress.

In the Foundation Stage teaching is good. It is characterised by activities that promote personal development and language skills through all areas of learning. So, children quickly learn to concentrate, relate well to others and develop confidence when speaking. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is good overall and is sometimes outstanding. The outstanding teaching reflects the benefits of an on-going programme to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including better assessment of learning in lessons and children's self-evaluation of their learning. The result is better planning that ensures that work is pitched even more accurately at the right level for children of

different abilities so that all make similarly good progress. A strong feature of the best teaching is marking that tells children what they need to do to improve and encourages them to do well.

Children who have learning difficulties or who are in the early stages of learning English benefit well from extra help provided by well-briefed teaching assistants, for example when enabling children to use verbs to give commands in a literacy lesson in Year 2. The most able children are challenged by their work and say that learning is fun. The school now needs to continue to develop the wide range of opportunities for children to write for different purposes in different subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the good curriculum meets the needs of all children, including those in the Foundation Stage, and fulfils statutory requirements. Children like what they do in school. They value the wide range of after-school clubs and activities that enrich the curriculum. They benefit from a range of outings, visitors to school and themed weeks which enhance their enjoyment and learning, as shown in a follow-up lesson to a visit by children in Year 1. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The very effective use of interactive whiteboards contributes significantly to children's enjoyment and enthusiasm to participate in lessons. The personal, social and health education programme makes a very strong contribution to children's excellent personal development.

The on-going implementation of planning that links subjects is aimed at improving the quality of the curriculum for all.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children acknowledge that they are well cared for and receive good levels of support and guidance. The support given to a child in the Foundation Stage with a statement of special educational need epitomises the way the school cares for all. Children demonstrate extremely caring attitudes toward one another and say they feel safe. This is because of the steps taken by staff and governors to ensure that all health and safety and child protection procedures are in place. The school is about to strengthen these good policies and procedures.

Comprehensive records enable teachers to track children's progress, identify those who need help and set realistic targets for further work. The school is also implementing a strategy that encourages children to assess how well they are doing and this helps to motivate them to do better. Older children identified as gifted or talented are further challenged through activities in partnership with a local secondary school. As a result, all children achieve well. Records also provide valuable information for parents, the vast majority of whom feel that the school keeps them well-informed about their children's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very perceptive leadership, fully supported by the senior management team and all other staff. A notable feature is the keenness of staff to improve their expertise to provide even better learning opportunities for all children.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. All shortcomings have been addressed. The accommodation has been improved. There are more planned opportunities for higher-attaining children to do well. There is much better provision and resources for information and communication technology. Assessment and recording procedures enable the progress of all children to be tracked very efficiently. The school is making progress on raising attainment in writing. The school's self-evaluation is very accurate, except that it underestimates the success of its provision for personal development and well-being. The school clearly shows that it has the capacity to make further improvements and knows what needs to be done to improve. This is shown by the school's two main priorities, which match the inspection team's findings. Additionally, the school is working to improve leadership and management by extending the roles and responsibilities of the subject leaders.

The governing body manages the school's finances well. The governors know the school well. They are kept informed of the impact of spending decisions, for example how the provision of interactive whiteboards has increased learning opportunities and motivates all children.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Levendale Primary School,
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15 November 2005

Dear Children,

Following our visit to your school this week we would like to thank you for being so friendly, helpful and polite. We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work in lessons.

We can see why you are proud of your school because:

your teachers and other adults in the school work hard to help you to do your best and to be safe and looked after in school

you enjoy learning and behave very well

you listen carefully to what others in your classes say, help each other and are very willing and proud to take on responsibilities

you enjoy taking part in a number of extra activities other than lessons

you have a headteacher who is very clear about what the school should do to help you to do your very best and the other teachers and adults in the school fully support her in this.

There are two things we have asked the school to do to make it better. The school should:

continue to give you many opportunities to write for a variety of purposes in different subjects in order to do better in writing

continue to help teachers to be even better at giving you work that will help you to improve and help you to be good at checking how well you are doing.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome. Always keep trying to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allison and Mrs Dodd

The Inspection Team

Annex B