



Layfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111624
LEA Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number 278735
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Keith Bardon

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Everingham Road
School category	Community		Yarm
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		TS15 9TF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 786153
Number on roll	176	Fax number	01642 783281
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Bob Stephenson
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Graeme Leck

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by 2 additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school providing education for boys and girls aged between 3 and 11 years. It is situated in a relatively prosperous area of Teesside. The attainment of the children when they first start school is a little higher than usual but varies considerably between individuals. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. With very few exceptions, all pupils are fluent in English. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. The school has had a new headteacher since it was last inspected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that its overall effectiveness and many individual aspects of its work are satisfactory. The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) gives them a solid start to school and most move into Year 1 with the skills and knowledge expected of that age group. Pupils' achievement across Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and standards are generally a little above the national average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and in most lessons pupils make steady progress. Teachers plan interesting activities, but lessons do not always provide the high level of challenge pupils need to keep them learning at pace. From their careful analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses the headteacher and senior staff have determined where they want to take the school, but their plans for getting it there are not clear enough. Other staff with management responsibilities lack the opportunity and some of the skills needed to make a full contribution to school development. The school pays close attention to pupils' personal development and they become confident, well-balanced individuals with a strong sense of responsibility. The curriculum stimulates pupils' interest in learning, and their progress, both academically and personally, is monitored closely. Since it was last inspected the school has moved forwards steadily, keeping up with national developments but without making any major gains, and senior staff and governors recognise that the school has scope for improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that pupils of all abilities are constantly and consistently challenged by the work they are set.
- Increase the pace of development by providing clearer and more sharply focused plans for improvement, implement them rigorously and monitor them systematically.
- Ensure that all members of staff with management responsibilities have the skills and the opportunities to make a full contribution to school self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory and the school's own evaluation is accurate. When they first enter the nursery the majority of children have the expected range of basic skills, although individually their attainment varies widely from well below that often found to well above. During their time in the Foundation Stage children make satisfactory progress and most attain or exceed the targets for their age before moving into Year 1. Year 2 pupils regularly attain results in the national tests that are a little above average. This is an accurate reflection of their attainment generally and represents satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2. Pupils' progress accelerates in Year 2 because the teaching is better. The results attained by Year 6 pupils in the national tests are also slightly above average overall, but are less consistent than in Year

2. While there was an improvement in English and science in 2005, results in mathematics fell. Consequently, the school met its targets for English at both the expected and above average levels but fell short of both targets in mathematics. The school has recognised that while pupils' achievement is satisfactory there is scope for improvement, and targets for 2006 have been set at challenging levels. It is the inconsistency of performance, particularly by higher attaining pupils, that the school is having difficulty eradicating. Senior staff need a clearer picture of how the decisions the school is taking are influencing pupils' achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school correctly views pupils' personal development and well-being as good. Children's personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage is good and provides a solid platform for their learning.

Pupils get on well with each other and with staff. They acquire important interpersonal skills which will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. Pupils are confident that if they have a concern someone is always available to listen to them and to give support. The school's policy of giving all staff quality time with pupils of different age groups helps strengthen these very positive relationships. Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Most try to eat healthily and to make full use of the drinking water that is readily available to them. They participate readily and take pleasure from the range of physical activities the school provides. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is clearly evident in the positive attitudes pupils show to school and in their enjoyment of learning. They behave well both in and out of lessons and show due respect for the thoughts and ideas of others. Attendance is satisfactory. They take pride in being able to voice their opinions through the school council and during class discussions. Their well-developed sense of responsibility is clearly evident in the matters they raise, such as how as a school they can protect the environment by recycling more materials. Pupils readily contribute to the well-being of others by acting as playground friends, running the school bookshop, aiding the elderly and supporting different charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the school's own evaluations are correct. Teaching has some good features but the level of challenge for pupils is too variable. In the best lessons, teachers have clear, high expectations of pupils, match work closely to children's abilities and use teaching strategies that maintain their interest and motivation. However, in other lessons, pupils are asked to do work that does not challenge them to think hard enough. Children enjoy learning and generally work hard.

Most lessons move along quickly but on occasions the pace is too slow and pupils' attention is allowed to slip. Teachers show good knowledge of different subjects and identify clear lesson objectives which they share with the pupils. Pupils try hard to meet the targets they have been set. The teaching of children with learning difficulties is satisfactory, with good support being given by teaching assistants. In the mixed-age classes in Years 4 to 6, teachers have made the correct decision to group pupils so that they are working with others of similar ability. In this way, the learning needs of the different age groups are being met. Teachers know pupils well and respond sensitively to their personal needs. Pupils hold their teachers in high regard and know that if they need help with their work they simply have to ask.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. Children speak convincingly of the pleasure they derive from the experiences the school provides. When discussing what they were learning, pupils in Years 4 and 5 described in graphic detail the ways in which Henry VIII's lifestyle changed him. The National Curriculum is covered comprehensively and pupils have sufficient opportunity to learn the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils now need more opportunities to think and to work out things for themselves. The curriculum is enriched through a very good range of additional arts, sports and other opportunities offered to pupils of all ages. These include participation in school productions and musicals, visits to local theatres and visiting specialists such as the gymnastics teacher from the local authority development team. Older pupils gain much from a residential visit to Hawsend. Children also have positive opportunities to contribute to the local community and there are good links with Billingham City Learning Centre and the local secondary school. These links help pupils to develop skills that will help them in their future study and work. There is good provision for pupil's personal, social and health education and citizenship, which enhances many aspects of their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school is good and evidence from the inspection supports the school's own view. Ensuring that children are supported well is a key factor of the school's work. Guidance for children with particular needs is provided carefully and sensitively. Support staff play a key role in supporting pupils who are experiencing particular difficulties. The school employs the support of outside agencies appropriately to support children with learning difficulties and this helps ensure that they make similar progress to their peers. Arrangements for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are secure. There are effective links with other schools, which help pupils to transfer smoothly. Pupils' progress is assessed thoroughly and they are set clear targets to help them improve their work. The best marking extends this and gives pupils a clear understanding of how well they have done and what they need to focus

on next. The school is now looking to further develop pupils' ability to assess their own work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The school has a positive ethos and a pleasant atmosphere and runs smoothly day-to-day. Considerable care is taken to ensure that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school. The work of the school is monitored and evaluated regularly, mostly by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know the direction in which the school needs to move. All information about the school is analysed thoroughly and accurate conclusions are drawn from it. However, the procedures used to convert this information into plans for action are inefficient. The school improvement plan is an extremely lengthy document and the main priorities for development are not immediately apparent. This makes it difficult for staff to focus on exactly what needs to be done to bring about improvement. Developing the role of subject and aspect coordinators was an issue from the last inspection. Some improvement has been made but more is required to ensure that all members of staff with management responsibilities are able to make a full contribution to school self-evaluation. Governors support the school well and are gradually strengthening their monitoring role, which currently is satisfactory. Parents are consulted regularly and their views are considered carefully by senior staff and governors. In recent years a number of new teachers have joined the staff and others have retired. These changes are viewed positively as an opportunity for development and there is a desire and a will to make what is a satisfactory school into one that is good or even better.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	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?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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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Layfield Primary School
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18 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Although we were with you for only two days, we thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and a special thanks to those who talked with us about the school.

These are the things we particularly liked about the school.

The school is a happy place to be and everyone gets on well.

Children try hard in lessons and enjoy learning new things.

Most children behave well and pay attention in class.

Children willingly help each other and their teachers.

Adults take good care of the children and are always there to help.

Children have a good understanding of how to do things in safe and healthy ways.

Children care about the needs of others

The school listens to children's views and acts on their suggestions, such as how to help the environment by recycling more materials.

There are lots of after-school clubs with something to interest everyone.

We also looked at what the school might do next. Here are some of the things we suggested:

look for ways to make lessons even more interesting by providing work that makes everyone think really hard all of the time

make sure everyone is clear about how to make the school even better.

Yours sincerely

Keith Bardon
(Lead inspector)

Annex B