

Leamore Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104157
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	308530
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Morrison

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ireene Malyon
Headteacher	D Brownsword
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2003
School address	Bloxwich Road Leamore Walsall WS3 2BB
Telephone number	01922 710514
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils at Leamore Primary School are of White British heritage. Most of the pupils live locally in an area of significant socio-economic deprivation and an above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average; however, these pupils are not distributed evenly across the school and some classes have significantly more than others. There are more boys than girls in most classes.

The school has successfully achieved the Activemark for sport and has won local singing competitions.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Leamore is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly because the headteacher provides strong leadership which is instrumental in developing a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. He promotes a strong sense of teamwork among all staff and this is shown in their shared understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school and raise standards. As a result, the school has good capacity to improve. The skills of other leaders and managers are still developing therefore overall leadership is satisfactory.

Standards are rising and are now broadly average because of accelerated progress in Year 6. Standards in writing are also improving but remain the weakest aspect of pupils' learning. Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage. Children enter the school with an average range of skills and knowledge and they achieve well because staff have a very good understanding of the needs of these young children. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress but they reach standards below those of their peers nationally. Boys achieve less well than girls because not enough activities are planned that stimulate their interest and involvement.

Pupils' pastoral care is good because their well-being is at the heart of the school's provision and promotes pupils' good personal development. Pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning experiences for the majority of pupils but some activities are not matched well enough to pupils' abilities to provide sufficient challenge. Pupils do not always see the connections between different aspects of what they are taught because too few links are made between subjects and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use their language and mathematical skills in other lessons. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities in music, particularly singing, and sport. Through opportunities such as raising money for charities, pupils contribute well to the community and are prepared satisfactorily for their future.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned well but day-to-day assessment is not used sufficiently well to ensure activities are well matched to pupils' learning needs. The marking of pupils' work is not linked closely enough to their learning targets and does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's learning and, as one parent said, 'the headteacher and staff are very friendly and easy to talk to.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle into the Nursery quickly and start to enjoy the wide range of activities provided. They grow in confidence and are eager to try new things. They enjoy learning and want to show what they know and can do. Children's personal and emotional development continues to progress well in the Reception class. Children's own chosen tasks are very successful in developing their independence and eagerness to learn. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and the curriculum is well planned to ensure that children's learning progresses well. There is a strong focus on children learning through their own choice of activities so they develop their abilities to plan and organise themselves. The staff recognise that opportunities to extend children's skills and to develop their language further are sometimes missed because of the lack of additional staff available at times. Teaching is good and children respond well.

Opportunities to write are well promoted and children are proud to place their own captions and labels beside the work they have completed. The classrooms are stimulating and well organised. The use of the shared secure outside area is planned effectively but it cannot be seen from the classrooms and this sometimes restricts its full use.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable pupils to make faster progress by ensuring activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and provide sufficient challenge.
- Ensure pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Provide a curriculum that engages pupils' interest and curiosity and gives them many opportunities to use and apply their language and mathematical skills.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's abilities when they start in the Nursery are below those expected and an increasing number of children have speech and language difficulties. They make good progress across all areas of learning and most reach the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are now close to average and this represents an improvement on 2007. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are average overall, although lower in writing. Achievement is satisfactory overall, although this is not yet consistent across the school. Pupils make good progress in Year 6. A range of initiatives are being used successfully to support pupils' progress and this is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the progress of boys and standards in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and want to do well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are caring and considerate of others and there is a strong sense of working together to help one another. Pupils are polite and personable and most try hard to do their best. The behaviour of most pupils is good, especially in lessons. There are no concerns regarding bullying as pupils are confident that 'teachers sort things out' and pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit but also recognise that they do not always manage to follow a healthy lifestyle.

There is an active school council which is helping to develop the school, for example through planning the playground improvements. Pupils also make a satisfactory contribution to the wider community through collections for local and national charities. Pupils' interest in learning, awareness of the world of work, for example through links to local businesses, and their developing skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) result in pupils being satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are usually interesting and teachers work hard to make them relevant to the world outside school. Teaching assistants play an important role in lessons, supporting pupils of all abilities, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner are used well throughout the school and encourage pupils to extend their thinking, for example in one lesson where pupils shared information about the workings of a vacuum cleaner. Pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy good relationships with their teachers. Interactive whiteboards are often used to motivate and interest pupils but this is not done consistently throughout the school. In some lessons, the introduction is too long and, as a result, the pace of learning is slow.

Some teaching lacks challenge and the learning of more able pupils is not always sufficiently extended. Teachers' marking does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work and assessment is not used well enough to match activities to pupils' differing abilities. In one lesson, however, the teacher recognised this and amended her planning because pupils had not fully understood an earlier lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced, with individual subjects taught separately. Whilst the school has focused appropriately on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, there are insufficient opportunities to use and apply these in other subjects and, as a result, standards in writing are not good enough, especially for boys. The school has identified the need to revise planning to develop a more creative curriculum with stronger cross-curricular links to make learning more meaningful, interesting and relevant to local circumstances. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of British society, for example, is satisfactory.

Music, especially singing, is a strength of the school. Sport is also a strength and the school has benefited from links with outside agencies and coaches. Gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to develop their abilities and there are dance and drama links with local secondary schools. Pupils' personal development is promoted well through the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme, although not all pupils do not yet actively follow a healthy lifestyle. There is a satisfactory range of visits and visitors such as the recent Year 6 residential visit to Wales, pupils' visits to the local library, theatre and museums, and the visit of a local author to promote writing skills. The school provides a satisfactory range of clubs and out-of-school activities. Some of these, such as the ICT 'story weaver' sessions, encourage parents to learn alongside their children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school responds well to individual pupils' needs and vulnerable pupils are well supported in their learning. Relationships are good; pupils feel safe and secure, and are confident to go to an adult if worried or unhappy. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are robust. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and encouraged, and teaching assistants play an important part in their personal learning development. The school

has begun to establish good links with parents to support pupils' learning. Foundation Stage staff communicate well with parents by being always available to discuss any concerns. The opportunity to use the school's toy library before children start in the nursery forms a very positive introduction to school and to learning, both for children and parents. Attendance has improved because of the school's good efforts but absence authorised by parents is still too high.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The tracking system identifies those likely to underachieve, and early interventions for these pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effective in enabling them to succeed. Marking and the use of targets are inconsistent, however, and pupils do not have a clear view of how well they are doing or how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is an effective leader who knows well the key strengths and areas for development of the school. His vision for the school has led to stronger teamwork amongst all staff, who share his commitment to the school and are increasingly involved in its development. There is now a clear focus on raising standards and increasing pupils' progress based on effective school self-evaluation and this is beginning to have an impact on pupils' attainment.

Senior leaders now take an active part in school improvement. They have contributed well to the school's self-evaluation, which is now accurate, based on wide-ranging information and used well to target action to address areas for development. The school is committed to equality of opportunity and identifies the needs of individual pupils quickly. Whilst school evaluation has indicated that boys and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not do as well as their peers nationally, actions taken by middle managers to address this are only just beginning to have an impact.

Governors are supportive of the school as 'critical friends'. They are starting to hold the school to account and have recently focused appropriately on school self-evaluation and pupils' progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leamore Primary School, Walsall, West Midlands, WS3 2BB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and showing us what you are learning. Because you were so friendly, polite and helpful, we found out quite a lot about your school.

- It gives you a satisfactory education so you make steady progress.
- Your headteacher leads your school well and so it is improving all the time.
- Teaching is satisfactory, and in some lessons good. You have lots of opportunities to take part in music, especially singing, and sports.
- Your teachers care for you and look after you and so you feel safe.
- You clearly enjoy being at school and asking lots of questions.
- The children in Foundation Stage get a good start to their school life.

In order that your school gets even better we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do the following.

- Make sure you make faster progress by giving you activities which challenge your thinking and which you find interesting and exciting.
- Make sure marking helps you to know how well you are doing and what you need to do to get better.
- Give you lots of opportunities to use your writing and mathematics skills in all the things you do in school.

You can help your teachers do this by making sure you come to school regularly and do your very best.

I wish you lots of success in the future.

With best wishes

Helen Morrison Lead inspector



4 July 2008

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Lead inspector