

# Little Leigh Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111051
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310488
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Johnson

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>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Wylie
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Hetherington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Shutley Lane Little Leigh Northwich Cheshire CW8 4RN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 288288
<b>Fax number</b>	01606 891180

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The overall effectiveness of the school was evaluated and the following aspects were investigated: the standards reached by pupils and the progress they make; the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; pupils' personal development; the quality of provision, with a particular focus on care, guidance and support; aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from first-hand observations, discussions with staff, governors, parents and pupils, and scrutiny of relevant documents held by the school. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school located in a rural setting on the outskirts of Northwich. Almost all pupils are White British. None are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is exceptionally small. A similarly small proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school gained successive achievement awards between 2001 and 2003 and in 2005 won national acclaim by attaining the best primary school results in Britain in national tests. Pupils are currently working towards achievement of the Artsmark and recently were finalists in a competition for a Science Prize award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Little Leigh is an outstanding school where pupils' achievement and their personal development go from strength to strength. Their impressive progress is underpinned by the work of very able staff, led by a highly effective leadership team. Leaders continually seek to build on the strengths of the school in order to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Achievement and standards are outstanding. From their average starting points on entering Reception, pupils make excellent progress to consistently reach well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The pace of progress is maintained as pupils move through the school. At the end of Year 6 standards in English are exceptionally high, with three quarters of the pupils attaining a level higher than expected for their age. Mathematics and science standards are well above average and have been so over a considerable period of time. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make rapid, and at times exceptional, progress because of the quality of support they receive and the resources provided to help them overcome specific difficulties and learn alongside others.

Pupils' outstanding personal development is a major factor in their academic success. Their attitudes to school are wonderful. It is not unusual to see pupils leave parents and carers in the lane to run into school, eager to join the early morning clubs provided for them. Their well above average attendance is witness to the amount of enjoyment pupils get from their learning. Pupils are fully aware of the benefits to be gained from a sensible diet and lots of exercise, hence the enthusiasm they express for the keep fit club and the range of other sports on offer. Behaviour is invariably exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils say there is no bullying and have high regard for the 'concerns box' whereby worries over faltering relationships can be raised and settlements negotiated. Politeness, good manners and a very well developed sense of responsibility towards the community are characteristic of pupils' personal qualities as they approach their time to transfer to secondary schools. Through the school council, pupils have a strong voice in school and local affairs. School council members, for example, monitor the buddy system and have put forward ideas to make it work even better. Year 4 pupils successfully campaigned to have litter bins sited in the nearby park to improve the quality of that environment.

There is overwhelming agreement among parents that their children are well cared for in school. Many speak very highly of the exceptional consideration given to the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. Actions include the installation of a sound amplification system in classrooms and provision of laptops to improve the learning environment for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils achieve equally as well as others in relation to their personal targets. Pupils share trusting relationships with adults who work in the school and are confident that their safety is given the highest priority. Pupils receive very clear guidance and support in their social and emotional development. They have a very good understanding of the importance of secure relationships and the potential hazards surrounding drugs and other substances. With their mature personal attitudes they are very well prepared to make choices about their personal safety and well-being. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Academic support and guidance are excellent. There are highly effective procedures for keeping track of pupils' progress. Teachers use assessment information exceptionally well to identify pupils' specific learning needs and ensure that these needs are met through challenging targets. This process, which is consistent throughout the school, results in pupils frequently achieving beyond the expectations for their age.

Teachers bring lessons to life by planning activities that challenge pupils' skills and make learning exciting and creative. All teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is evident, not only in impressive levels of attainment, but also in the exceptional quality achieved by pupils in the presentation of their work. The school was recognised recently for its outstanding teaching of science, as finalists in the Rolls Royce Science Prize Award. The impressive array of science resources gathered for the project is now loaned to schools and other local groups involved in similar work. The curriculum is varied and vibrant and is enhanced by a very good range of additional activities that enrich pupils' learning and contribute enormously to their personal development, providing them with a sense of awe and wonder. These include a residential experience for all pupils from Year 1 to 6.

One of the most important qualities of the headteacher's exceptional leadership is his ability to encourage others to reflect upon and improve their own expertise. With outstanding support from the deputy headteacher he has brought about consistency in teaching quality, and in the way all staff hold themselves accountable for standards and achievement. There is excellent teamwork throughout a staff that continually strives to build on what has already been achieved. The excellent systems for monitoring the school's performance have ensured leaders' reliable self-evaluation and their outstanding capacity to maintain the high quality of education and care. Governors are highly supportive and have improved their effectiveness. Financial management is finely tuned. Given that the cost per pupil is below average, the school provides outstanding value for money. The school has acted on parents' collective views with regard to after-school care and safe transport of pupils and is currently following up plans to have both provided. The vast majority of parents have highly positive views of the school which, perhaps, can best be summarised by, 'I feel privileged to have had my children taught here.'

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The Foundation Stage is exceptionally well led and managed and provides children with an outstanding start to their journey through the school. Children's skills vary when they first start at Little Leigh, but are mostly in line with expectations for their age. At the end of Reception all children meet and most exceed the nationally expected targets. They make rapid progress in all areas of learning. Children are exceptionally well cared for and make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They abound with confidence, become enthusiastic learners and have their say in the school council. Teaching of communication language and literacy skills is highly effective. Skilled teaching of phonics results in children quickly linking letters and sounds and beginning to read and write independently. The transition into Year 1 is very well managed to ensure that children get to know their new teachers and settle into their new surroundings. Assessments are used exceptionally well by teachers to plan step-by-step learning and ensure that their needs are met as they progress. Parents are welcomed as they bring their children into school and appreciate the opportunities to share information about their children's progress with Reception class teachers.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- The leadership has clearly identified what needs to be done to sustain school improvement. Consequently, there are no further issues to add.

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## 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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am sure you will all remember that I visited your school a short time ago to find out how well you are learning. I certainly remember the extremely warm welcome you gave me and how many of you asked if I needed anything during my visit. Your constant smiles made my day very pleasant, so thank you for that.

You have an outstanding school and you make excellent progress. The standards you reach in English are really impressive but let's not forget that you do extremely well in mathematics, science and lots of other things as well. Your behaviour is amazing and you are all so polite that it is no wonder that everyone is so happy to be in your school. I could not help noticing how healthy you are. I expect that those fantastic school lunches are just one of the reasons why your attendance is always exceptionally good. That's very important, so keep it up!

Of course, these great things don't just happen by themselves. Your teachers, and all the other adults in the school, look after you extremely well to make it easier for you to learn. Your teachers make your lessons really exciting and always know exactly what you need to learn next. Very importantly, your headteacher works hard to make sure you always get the best that the school can provide.

Your parents, teachers and school governors are very pleased about how well you are doing and want your school to continue in this way. Therefore it is extremely important that you continue to work hard and achieve as well as you have in the past.