

Lea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112536
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310920
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	106
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jonathan Waite
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Wallis
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lea Church Street Nr Matlock Derbyshire DE4 5JP
Telephone number	01629 534 286
Fax number	01629 534286

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Lea and the surrounding area. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds and a very small number of pupils have English as an additional language. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is above average overall, but does vary from year to year; this is evident in the current school population with some year groups having much higher proportions of pupils with learning difficulties than others. The school building accommodates a privately run after school club. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools award and the Sports Active Mark. A temporary headteacher is in post for this term and a new headteacher takes up post in January 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some important good features and some areas for further improvement. Significant staffing turbulence has coincided with an interruption to the pace and effectiveness of school improvement. However, the acting headteacher, supported by a committed staff team, is ensuring that the school has continued to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. They have quickly identified key areas for future improvement. A large majority of parents are supportive of the school's work and are quite rightly appreciative of the care and support their children receive from the headteacher and staff. One said 'Children are motivated to learn and staff are caring and supportive'. Another said that 'The school is well organised and has a deep regard for children's welfare.'

The school provides satisfactory care and academic guidance for pupils and meets aspects of their pastoral needs well. Consequently, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils much enjoy school, particularly when they engage in practical lessons and activities. They know how to keep safe, and they understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils regularly support a range of charitable causes and take responsibility through a range of roles offered at school. Additional support for pupils not making the expected progress is uneven and not monitored or assessed effectively, consequently pupils do not always make the progress they could. However, their good personal skills, along with sound basic skills, prepare pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good lessons include activities that challenge pupils whatever their ability, with pupils being clear about what they have to do and about how well they have done; however this quality of teaching is not consistent across the school so in some lessons learning slows. The curriculum is satisfactory. It offers good personal development and promotes enjoyment. Planning for the curriculum has recently improved to enable greater development of skills and to reinforce links between subjects, however it is too early to see the full impact of this work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Consequently, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and sometimes better. Pupils who find learning more difficult are supported well and so make good progress. By the time pupils leave the school at Year 6 standards are above and sometimes well above average, particularly in writing and science. In mathematics, overall progress is average, although fewer pupils attain the higher levels than in English and science. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school do not consistently ensure leaders and managers focus on the key areas for improvement. However, the improvements that have been made, and the determination to do even better, demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. This stems from good provision, high quality care and effective leadership, which ensure that children settle quickly and engage happily in their learning. The staff work in close liaison with parents, keeping them regularly informed of children's progress and gaining their trust and confidence. Good liaison exists between the school and the private playgroup, and this effectively supports children's transition into school. Good arrangements exist to ensure the health and safety of children.

Learning is based on practical activities, with lots of opportunities for imagination and play. For example, the children were involved in investigating bones as part of their topic work. In this well-planned and imaginative lesson learning was stimulating, and the children talked excitedly about the structures of skeletons. Children regularly receive creative and stimulating lessons, which have a major impact on their learning. As a result, children's overall achievement is good. Staff evaluate children's progress in learning and plan activities to meet their learning needs well. They give particular emphasis to developing personal, social and communication skills, and their personal development and well-being is good. Children play well independently, demonstrating a good understanding of what they are learning. They can explain what they are doing. At the time of the inspection, children had just joined the Reception class, but were already working confidently and happily and were cooperating well with each other. Good use is made of the outside learning area, despite limited space and no soft play areas. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. From their starting points, most children reach the standards expected by the time that they move to Year 1 and many exceed them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in mathematics so that it matches English and science.
- Make effective use of assessment information to plan tasks that challenge learners to make good progress.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels implement rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken to bring about whole school improvement.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage to achieve the standards above those expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. Progress has remained satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2 standards remain above average. The standards pupils reach by the end of Year 6 also remain above average, but in recent years there have been significant fluctuations in the rates of progress made. For example, standards in writing, an area of school focus, increased significantly last year, but progress in mathematics was weaker, with too small a proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. In 2007, progress in science dipped considerably from previous years, although the rate of progress quickened to achieve much higher standards the following year. At the time of the inspection, the rate of pupil progress was seen to vary between age groups, but pupils are on target to achieve increasingly challenging targets by the end of Year 6. Pupils who need additional support and those who find learning more difficult are supported well and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Assemblies and topic themes ensure spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils take responsibility in a range of ways, for example as monitors and lunchtime helpers to aid the smooth running of the school. There is an active school council. Pupils raise money to support a range of charitable causes. This supports their good personal development, encourages them to make a significant contribution to the school community and helps to

prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good, and pupils respond well on an individual basis with school staff. A very small minority of pupils find sustained appropriate behaviour difficult, but they are supported well by adults. Pupils say they enjoy school, as reflected in their above average levels of attendance. They eagerly take part in a range of activities which effectively support the school and wider community. Pupils show that they have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They have been taught successfully how to keep safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers promote positive relationships and appropriate behaviour in classrooms. Consequently, most pupils enjoy learning and work hard. In the best lessons, practical activities engage pupils and encourage them to develop problem solving skills and learn for themselves. In these lessons, pupils proceed at a good pace. However, planning does not always result in activities that are matched to the pupils' differing abilities, especially to challenge the more able. Questioning is directed to move pupils on, but some of the questioning is not open ended enough to encourage learners to think for themselves. In addition, opportunities to promote independent learning and for pupils to practise what they have learned are not always taken. The quality of marking has improved since the last inspection, informing pupils of the next steps in their learning and celebrating their achievements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched well. Pupils enjoy opportunities for a range of educational visits, including residential visits focusing on outdoor adventurous activities. A wide range of visitors help to enhance provision. Themed focus weeks such as the recent Lea Carnival, brought the school and wider community together in a celebration of village life. These curriculum events help bring learning alive. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils of all ages. Homework is completed regularly and contributes satisfactorily to pupils' progress. Personal, social and health education ensures pupils make healthy and safe choices. Links with community groups and the church add enrichment and opportunities to contribute beyond the school community. Planning lacks consistency. It occasionally lacks detail of how the work will challenge pupils of all abilities. The curriculum is not thoroughly and effectively monitored across the school and so rates of progress fluctuate across subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to ensuring the safety, welfare and protection of pupils, and management procedures are satisfactory in this regard. An appropriate focus is given to promoting pupils' personal, emotional and social development. Staff work particularly successfully in promoting pupils' confidence and their ability to deal successfully with emotional or social issues. Everyone is included successfully in school life. Teachers and able teaching assistants support pupils who need additional support well to ensure that they make good progress, working successfully with outside agencies where appropriate. Academic guidance is

satisfactory. Information from tracking pupils' progress is not used quickly enough to ensure that all pupils are challenged to do as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has experienced a period of staffing turbulence, including changes to the senior leadership team. A new headteacher has been appointed to take up post in January 2009. The current acting headteacher and her colleagues have worked hard to ensure that the school has continued to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. They have had a positive impact on improving achievement in writing and in phonics. Governors are supportive of the school and governance is satisfactory. The current headteacher has led the staff well in analysing the school's strengths and weaknesses, but previous systems for monitoring and evaluating actions taken to effect school improvement have not been rigorous enough. Consequently, leaders and managers at all levels do not have a clear picture of what the school does well and what it need to do to improve, and there is too much variation in the rate of school improvement from year to year and subject to subject.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 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

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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

18 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lea Primary School, Lea, Matlock DE4 5JP

Thank you for the polite and warm welcome I received when I visited your school recently. I very much enjoyed speaking with you and visiting your classrooms. I thought you would like to know what I found out about your school.

You clearly enjoy school and gain a lot from the friendships and opportunities provided. I was impressed by your good behaviour and the respect that you show one another and to grown-ups; well done. I think your teachers are helping you to become mature and confident young people.

You told me that you enjoy lessons, especially when they are interesting and stimulating. I can see that you are acquiring good standards and making satisfactory progress in your lessons. I was impressed with your recent improvements, especially in science and writing. I have asked your teachers to help you make better progress in mathematics and to give you work that is more challenging. You can help by rising to this challenge and always trying your best. I have also asked the teachers and governors to look more carefully at the work of the school so they can be even more effective in their work.

Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to make your school even better, and with the governors, they are determined to keep improving your school. I agree with your headteacher that teaching and learning can be even better across the school. I am sure you will play your part by working hard, doing your best and enjoying your time at school.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jones

Lead inspector