

Leigh Central Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106418
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	324395
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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)	161
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	Mrs M Lowton
Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne Collinson
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Windermere Road Leigh Lancashire WN7 1UY
Telephone number	01942 673810
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Just over half of the pupils are of White British heritage and the remaining pupils come from a broad range of minority ethnic groups, the largest being of Pakistani and Slovakian heritage. Two fifths of the pupils speak English as an additional language and many of these are at an early stage of learning English. A larger than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual.

The school is currently being rebuilt and refurbished as two local primary schools are in the process of being co-located on one site with some shared facilities. Pupils are currently housed in approximately half of the space which was formerly available to them while the work is carried out. Outdoor play space is severely restricted.

The school provides education for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class and holds the Healthy Schools Award and the Wigan Sportsmark Gold Award.

There is privately managed extended childcare provision on site that was subject to a separate inspection and will receive a separately written report.

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, which cares for its pupils exceptionally well. Pupils enjoy their learning and speak warmly about their school. They know they are expected to work hard, but say that they 'get lots of support'. Parents appreciate the school's welcoming atmosphere and comment that staff are always friendly and approachable.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and are enthusiastic learners. They develop an excellent understanding of cultural diversity and show exemplary respect for each other's beliefs. This is largely why there is very little bullying or racism in school. Pupils are eager for responsibility. They look after one another in the playground and take an active part in the school council, where they are able to make mature and informed decisions about creating a better school and a better world. By learning about good diets and exercise pupils acquire a strong understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. Educational visits outside school and visitors help pupils to learn about the workplace.

Achievement and standards in the school are good. From below expected levels of skills and development on entry to the Reception class, pupils make good progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. This is due to good teaching and the school's effective support for pupils who need extra help to enable them to make progress in their learning. A strong focus on speaking and listening is proving very effective in the school's drive to improve standards in writing. Teaching assistants play a big part in this, working closely with individuals and small groups of pupils on focused activities to address their specific needs. The school supports very well the large proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual, particularly those who are newly arrived in this country from overseas and who may also need help with learning to speak English. They quickly settle into the school community and make good progress.

Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly and their progress is rigorously assessed. However, the guidance for pupils on how to improve their work is not as strong in some classes as it is in others and so these pupils are unsure of the next steps in their learning, particularly in writing.

A good, broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. School leaders know the school's main strengths and areas for improvement through robust procedures for checking individual pupils' progress. However, it is not easy for school leaders to check how well different groups of pupils are doing so as to identify more easily when they need help and to check the impact of strategies to improve pupils' performance.

The school has improved since the last inspection and demonstrates good capacity to improve further. This is evident in the improved quality of teaching and learning, rising standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2, especially for the more able pupils, and the way in which the school is successfully tackling the issue of persistent absence through building strong links with parents and carers. The school is a safe, calm and nurturing place where pupils thrive and learn vital skills to support them in later life.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills, on entering school, are below those typically expected for their age. Literacy and numeracy skills are well below expected levels. Many children are unable to speak English. Good provision helps them to achieve well. By the end of the Reception year children reach

varying standards across the areas of learning. Their personal and social skills have reached the levels expected for their age. Their reading and writing skills are still below those expected for their age but nevertheless show good progress based on their starting points. Teaching is good. Accurate assessments are made of children's learning and are used effectively to plan the next steps. Children benefit from a good balance of activities led by adults and those they choose themselves. They have good opportunities to explore and learn independently in the bright and stimulating classroom environment. Outdoor provision is limited due to the current building work, but the school works hard to make the best use of available space to support children's learning and development. The quality of leadership and management is good. This is evident in the well planned induction to school, the high levels of care and support provided for children, strong links with parents and the continual improvement in the standards reached by young learners.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop simple systems to check more easily how well different groups of pupils are doing, what help they need and the impact of strategies to improve their performance.
- Make sure that teachers' marking of pupils' written work consistently gives them clear guidance on the next steps in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the time they are ready to move on to the next phase in their education pupils reach standards which are broadly in line with the national average. From their initially below and well below expected starting points at the beginning of the Reception class, this represents good progress. Standards in writing are lower than they are in reading and mathematics, particularly at the end of Key Stage 1. The school's strategies to improve standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2 are proving effective, particularly in relation to the more able pupils currently in Year 6. Pupils speaking English as an additional language, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable children make good progress from their individual starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, and treat one another with respect. Staff ensure that pupils from different heritages share their beliefs in school and representatives of the many faiths in the community visit regularly. This leads to pupils' strong awareness of the need for tolerance and understanding and means that racist incidents in school are very rare. Pupils' behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory on balance for although the great majority of pupils come to school every day a small number have persistent absences. Pupils understand the importance of eating a well balanced diet and taking plenty of exercise. They enjoy learning and playing together and grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from harm without being unnecessarily fearful. They make a positive contribution to the community through a series of fundraising events for charity and taking part in local events. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives through a series of mini-enterprise projects. These involve managing small budgets, costing out items for sale and developing an understanding of profit and loss.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use effective methods to support the needs of all groups of pupils. Warm relationships between adults and pupils underpin the work of the school. Teachers ensure that pupils feel secure in contributing to class discussions and offering answers to questions. They give frequent praise and help pupils understand that making mistakes is part of the process of learning and nothing to worry about. Effective teaching assistants develop very well the skills of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of speaking English. They provide just the right levels of support through programmes that carefully meet pupils' individual needs and move them to the next stage of learning. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers ensure that pupils are clear about the learning objectives. There are appropriate levels of challenge for pupils with different levels of ability. Activities are interesting and motivate pupils to want to learn more. All this leads to good progress. In a small minority of lessons pupils spend too long listening to teachers rather than actively engaging in their learning. This means their progress is not as rapid as it is in other lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum, which meets pupils' different needs and interests successfully. Pupils have many opportunities to practise writing in different subject areas and this is helping them to improve their skills. Plans are in place to improve pupils' access to information and communication technology (ICT) equipment once the school moves into the new building. Many extra activities, such as drama, educational visits and creative arts, add to pupils' enjoyment of school. A strong focus on inclusion means that pupils of all ages and abilities are fully involved in the rich life of the school community and supports pupils' good personal development. French is a notable feature throughout the school and pupils gain a clear insight into a different European culture. The school makes good provision for a variety of sporting and creative arts clubs at lunchtimes and after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides an exceptionally high level of pastoral care for all its pupils, and particularly for vulnerable children and their families. Exceptionally strong partnerships with outside agencies, other local schools, business and the local community further support pupils' learning and personal development. The recently appointed learning mentor gives effective support to pupils and their families. The small number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing steadily because families are helped successfully to understand the importance of regular attendance. The checking of pupils' progress is good. Teachers set challenging targets for individual improvement and these are regularly reviewed. Marking shows pupils how well they are doing in relation to their targets. However, teachers' comments in the marking do not always give clear guidance on the next steps pupils need to take to reach these targets and so pupils are unclear as to what they need to do to improve their work. The school complies with the current statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, with high aspirations for pupils' academic and personal development. School leaders at all levels set challenging targets for improvement. Progress against these targets is systematically checked through the school's tracking procedures. Thorough and regular analysis of data on pupils' progress is effective because it results in swift action in the classroom to support individual pupils who may not be making as much progress as they should. However, the current tracking system makes it difficult for the school to check the progress of specific groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, information on the impact of strategies put in place to improve the performance of these groups is not easily accessible and this lessens the ability of the school to measure their effectiveness and plan for future improvements. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. Many families are newly arrived in this country, and the school reaches out to them not only by offering support for their children's education, but through organising social occasions where parents and carers can meet with a broad range of professional support agencies including healthcare and social services. Governors are involved in the life of the school and have a sound knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement. They are able to challenge school leaders and to hold them to account for the school's performance. The school gives good value for money through effective financial management and use of resources to raise standards and achievement.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	3
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	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you all for being so polite and helpful. A special thank you to those pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us about all the exciting and enjoyable things that are happening in your school.

We were all impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and how hard you all work to learn new things. We also know how lucky you are to have such kind and caring teachers who make your lessons interesting and fun and are always willing to give you a bit of extra help you when you need it. You achieve well and the standard of your work is improving.

You go to a good school where you know you are safe and can learn happily together. We have asked your school to do two things to make your school an even better place to learn.

- Give you more guidance on the next steps in your learning, especially your writing.
- Develop simple systems to help your school leaders find out more quickly how well some special groups of pupils are doing so that they can give these groups some extra help if they need it.

You can help by continuing to try your very best. Also, do try to come to school every day unless you are ill. This is very important – if you do not come to school you may miss out on an important part of your learning as well as all the fun of playing with your friends.

Thank you again for making our visit such a pleasure. Good luck for the future!