

Layfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111624
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	325417
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	178
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 Andrew Hogg
Headteacher	Mrs Hazel Ducker
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Everingham Road Yarm TS15 9TF
Telephone number	01642 786153
Fax number	01642 783281

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school, where a large majority of pupils come from White British heritages. Of the very small number from minority ethnic groups, only a very small percentage does not have English as a first language. There are few indicators of social or economic hardship and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a morning and afternoon Nursery and one Reception class. A private provider offers a breakfast and after-school club on the same site and this was inspected separately by Ofsted.

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. It is an improving one and has several outstanding features. These include a vibrant and highly relevant curriculum, which incorporates pupils' interests and meets all pupils' needs. By its special subject weeks, visits and visitors it enriches pupils' understanding and motivates them well for further challenge. Its after-school clubs promote physical health, widen pupils' interests and establish the importance of hobbies for enjoyment. The school takes excellent care of its pupils both pastorally and academically. It meets all statutory requirements, has shown exemplary care to its pupils and their families and does everything it can to educate its pupils about safety and security. Pupils know their learning targets and are very well supported towards achievement. Since the last inspection leaders and managers at all levels have successfully set very clear directions for improvement.

The school is very popular with the overwhelming majority of its parents and carers. Many from outside its catchment area choose this school because of 'its warm community atmosphere, where children are happy.' The praise given to the headteacher for building a strong and well-informed staff team and for increasing pupils' educational and creative achievement is richly deserved. Children begin Nursery with skills typical for this age group. Progress across the school is good and by the time they leave in Year 6, pupils are reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Booster classes and challenging projects secure the more able pupils' progress while pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive specific programmes from well-trained staff and expertise from outside agencies. These children make comparable progress to their peers.

Pupils also achieve well personally because of the supportive atmosphere in which they learn. Respect for others is actively encouraged. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good: they are very friendly and polite. They are confident speakers because they know their views are listened to. They have contributed to many community projects, including raising funds for a school in Uganda and establishing links with culturally different schools in Bradford and Harrow. Attendance is still only average, despite the school's many endeavours to improve this; the excessive absence of some pupils has a negative effect on their achievement. Pupils nevertheless show highly positive attitudes to learning, enjoy the range of opportunities on offer to them and appreciate their teachers.

Teaching and learning are good and a number of outstanding lessons were observed during the inspection. A very effective monitoring system has ensured greater consistency across the school, while the efficient use of progress tracking has ensured that the tasks set match pupils' needs. Staff are particularly effective at devising a variety of activities to suit the different interests and abilities. Occasionally, when too much time is spent on introductions, practice sessions and providing explanations, the challenge for the more able pupils is lost and this limits their progress. Marking is very constructive and provides excellent detailed instruction on how to reach targets. However, pupils rarely respond to this and opportunities for further learning are missed.

Overall, the school has good capacity to make further progress because it is well led and managed by an excellent headteacher, a highly competent staff and a very knowledgeable and active governing body. These work well together, reviewing all aspects of school life and ensuring the efficient use of resources. The leadership team has high expectations and is never complacent. It is working to lift provision and achievement further and seeks to augment

facilities for both community and school by the development of a new Children's Centre. Currently the school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because it is well led and managed. It provides an excellent standard of welfare, secures children's personal development and successfully helps them to learn, develop and achieve. When children begin Nursery their skills are typical for this age group. In response to good and sometimes excellent teaching progress has improved recently and pupils begin Year 1 having reached the national average with many exceeding this. Children's personal development is secured by good induction arrangements, well-established procedures, an emphasis on courtesy and consideration and effective communication with parents, who receive good information on supporting their child's class work. Welfare is given high priority: risk assessments are regularly updated and the children are given daily prompts about health and safety. Provision, indoor and outdoor, is well organised, well balanced, stimulating and attractive. Relationships between staff and children are good and, as a result, children feel safe and are happy. They cooperate well with their peers and enjoy the well-planned and imaginative activities. Assessment is accurate and is used efficiently to ensure children with specific needs are identified early and that all children receive the necessary knowledge and skills to make progress. Occasionally, the more able children do not begin extension work quickly enough but overall, staff develop children's interests and needs very well, because they listen carefully and extend children's language and learning. The development of the Children's Centre will provide further opportunities to expand provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils have opportunities to correct and redraft work incorporating comments from the teachers' marking and their guidance.
- Further improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring challenge for the more able pupils permeates all aspects of lessons.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils who are absent too often so that their rate of progress accelerates.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Current standards in Key Stage 1 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. These are higher than in the 2008 test results, which were broadly average because of the ability of the cohort. This year's standards denote a return to the higher test results of 2006 and 2007.

Standards at Key Stage 2 are also above average in English, mathematics and science. This reflects the national test results for 2008, although writing, especially for the more able pupils, has improved further due to its high priority in the school's development plan and the introduction of successful initiatives. Teacher assessments show these pupils started Year 3 at average levels and most pupils make good progress, including the able, gifted and talented and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because of the school's effective inclusion policies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good as is spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils enjoy their learning, are proud of their success and appreciate the large variety of opportunities on offer to them. They know the importance of nutritional food and drinking fresh water. They take plenty of exercise. Pupils feel safe in school and value the relationships they have with staff and other pupils. Although a very small number of parents have concerns about negative behaviour, no evidence of this was observed and behaviour is good. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare but should the occasion arise, they know what to do and are confident in the teachers' ability to resolve it. Pupils are encouraged to explore their views and feelings about themselves and others. They are also given lots of opportunities to take responsibility, from befriending schemes for newcomers to designing and managing the school website and organising a 'thank you strawberry tea' for supporters of the school. The 'Pupil Voice' programme, which has enabled a group of pupils to seek out and share good ideas from neighbouring schools, has boosted the self-esteem of those involved. Despite the school's best endeavours attendance remains satisfactory, thus impacting on the achievement of some children. Pupils' appreciation of British and global diversity has grown because of European studies, charity fundraising, partnerships with British and global schools and work within their own community, including the church. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, leaving school with above average basic skills, experience of teamwork and a real enthusiasm for learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and there is improved consistency across the school. Accurate tracking of progress enables teachers to identify appropriate tasks for different abilities but sometimes the introductions, practice sessions and explanations are too long for the more able pupils and they miss the opportunity for further challenge. Staff have good subject knowledge and provide stimulating activities, which engage and sustain pupils' attention. They use the interactive whiteboards well to support their clear explanations and give pupils good individual support. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are proud to share their work with others and confident enough to display a sense of humour in class discussion. Pupils' use of technical language is secure and writing has improved greatly. Teachers' marking is often exemplary and indicates clearly how improvements can be made. However, pupils are rarely given the opportunity to redraft and correct their work. Learning through improving their own work is therefore restricted.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An outstanding curriculum meets statutory requirements and is well matched to pupils' needs and interests. It sustains an effective balance between spontaneity and well-planned learning opportunities. There is flexibility to allow children to respond fully to events of the moment, for example, a snow storm and a visiting bat! Both experiences stimulated art, reading, writing and research. At the same time, pupils experience a broad, well-planned curriculum. Science, French, information and communication technology (ICT) and sports weeks create opportunities

to develop subject and general skills. Pupils also study cross-curricular themes, which encourage high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, there is a range of curricular provision to meet the needs of all abilities from intervention and catch-up programmes to making DVDs, based upon pupils' work in and beyond lessons. A wide range of extra-curricular activities from street dance to gardening enriches the curriculum while visits and visitors add variety, motivate pupils and engage parents in their children's learning. This creates a stimulating curriculum, where pupils learn about themselves and discover the world in which they live.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. All staff take responsibility for the success and happiness of children across the school, valuing them as individuals. A wide variety of partnerships including those with local schools, charities, higher education and other agencies help prepare pupils socially, emotionally and academically for their next steps. The school has robust procedures to raise attendance and contacts parents promptly to identify the effect of absence on their child's progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and able, gifted and talented pupils have a wide variety of opportunities available to them and are excellently supported. This impacts positively on their progress as well as benefiting the wider school community. The school has robust child protection and general safeguarding measures in place and these are reviewed regularly. There have been no exclusions and pupils thrive in this warm, happy community.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good at all levels. The excellent headteacher has a very clear vision for improvement and sets a precise direction to achieve this. She has established a cohesive team of competent and hard-working staff, empowered through well-matched training, the sharing of responsibilities and regular encouragement. As a result, staff lead initiatives confidently and effectively track pupils' progress to assess the impact of their work, although some are not yet confident in identifying trends and patterns. The curriculum has been revitalised and this has succeeded in motivating staff and pupils to higher achievement. Governance is good. Some governors are new but most are very knowledgeable and have accurately identified areas for development, such as the Children's Centre, which will extend the school's community involvement. Together with the headteacher and staff, governors have promoted high quality care and education and successfully raised achievement using challenging targets. They have contributed effectively to the school's accurate self-evaluation. The leadership team is determined to raise standards further and have used resources efficiently. The school is well staffed, well equipped and well run. By evaluating and developing its own community involvement and extending its links with other British and schools globally, community cohesion has been well developed. The school now has good capacity for further improvement and currently provides good value for money.

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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?	2
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?	1
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	2
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

19 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Layfield Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS15 9TF

Thank you for the welcome you gave me and my colleague during your recent inspection. Your behaviour was good and you were most courteous. Your parents' comments in the questionnaires were very helpful. Please thank them on my behalf.

Your school is a good school. It is an improving one and has several outstanding features. These include a curriculum, which is exciting and meets all your needs and very high standards of care, guidance and support, which keep you safe, secure and happy. Most of you are making good progress in your work. I know this from analysing your progress, observing your lessons and scrutinising your work. By the time you leave in Year 6 you will have achieved well and most will have very effective basic skills. Teaching and learning are good. The staff work very hard to help you make progress. They are very knowledgeable and devise some very imaginative activities to sustain your concentration. You are also learning how to become responsible citizens of the future. Your knowledge of healthy and safe life styles is good; you participate in community projects and have plenty of experience of working in a team. Your school is well led, well equipped and well run. I have asked your school to make three improvements. These are to:

- ensure you have opportunities to correct and redraft your work, using comments teachers have made in your books
- further improve teaching and learning by making sure that all of you are sufficiently challenged in lessons
- improve the attendance of some of you because missing school affects your progress.

Your headteacher, staff and governors have made many improvements in the last two years. They are keen to make even more progress. You can help by paying attention in class, completing your homework and striving to reach 100% attendance!

My very best wishes to you and your families.

Yours faithfully

Joan Elton

Lead inspector