

Leesons Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101633
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	331589
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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)	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 Ray Humby
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Rush
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Leesons Hill St Paul's Cray Orpington BR5 2LS
Telephone number	01689 602786
Fax number	01689 870844

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Leesons is a smaller-than-average primary school. Most pupils are White British. A very small minority are from Romany or Gypsy backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of them struggle with basic literacy and numeracy or need help to settle in class. At the time of the last inspection, the school was given a Notice to Improve because achievement was inadequate and standards were too low. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage for children in the Reception class. A private company, in partnership with the school, provides provision for children in the Nursery.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Leasons Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. There are strengths in the pupils' personal development, in the pastoral care they receive, and in the curriculum. The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school based on raising standards and achievement. Through accurate self-evaluation, senior leaders have identified clear priorities for improvement. Staff working at all levels have responded well to the challenge of improving the school. Standards are rising as a result of the appropriate action the school has taken. Consequently, achievement is now satisfactory. One parent wrote, expressing the views of many, 'I think the headteacher is just the medicine the school needs.'

Action taken to develop the Early Years Foundation Stage has been successful in bringing swift improvements. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class where teachers plan a good range of stimulating work. The balance between independent tasks and activities led by adults is now good and helps children to develop their social skills and confidence well.

Teaching and learning through the rest of the school is satisfactory. Regular checks are made on the progress pupils are making, which helps the school to quickly identify those who need additional support. Nevertheless, teachers are not using assessment information well enough in every class to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged. Consequently, expectations about what the pupils are capable of are not always high enough, particularly for more-able pupils. As a result, rates of progress are uneven. This is why achievement is satisfactory overall, although in some classes it is good. Marking gives feedback on strengths, but it does not always make clear to pupils how to improve their work. Phase and middle leaders are not fully involved in the monitoring process in order to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.

The curriculum provides a broad and balanced range of work. Literacy and numeracy are rightly prioritised to underpin improved rates of progress in basic skills. Pupils' creative, practical and personal talents are well promoted. For example, in Years 3 and 4 all pupils learn to play the recorder. Pupils in Year 6 are proud of the mosaic they are making to decorate the front entrance to the school. The range of extra-curricular clubs is extremely varied and very popular. One parent typically enthused, 'There is so much going on before, during and after school.' The extensive outdoor areas are used well and the award-winning garden is a particular highlight. Consequently, pupils enjoy school very much. They have positive attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. One pupil said proudly, 'Our school has really changed. It's so good now, there's a waiting list to get in.' Attendance, an issue at the time of the last inspection, has improved and is satisfactory. Appropriate strategies are in place to monitor and successfully promote regular attendance. Punctuality is also better.

Parents praise the school and many made a point of writing to express their appreciation for the changes the school is making. One typically wrote, 'The school has improved a great deal in the last year.' The school is working hard to harness the support of the parents and runs a wide variety of workshops to help them support their children's learning at home.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with a range of skills and capabilities that are generally below those expected for their age. Communication and language skills are particularly weak. Consistently good teaching ensures children make good progress and reach the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year. The teaching of letters and sounds to support reading and writing skills is rightly prioritised. A recent innovation has been the use of 'talking sound buttons' around the classroom to explain literacy tasks that children can select for themselves. Children are challenged to explain their play and activities to one another. They work well together during their learning. Relationships are very positive: the children settle quickly and sustain their interest in the work they are doing. The children are very happy and adults ensure their welfare is well promoted at all times so that the children thrive in a safe and caring environment. Some enhancements to provision are recent and have not yet had time to increase children's achievement further. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Parents are extremely positive about the start their children have made at the school. One wrote, 'My child really enjoys coming to this school.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teaching and learning are consistently good so that all pupils achieve as well as they can and know how to improve their work.
- Use information from assessment and marking to set suitably challenging work for all pupils, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Extend the roles of phase and middle leaders to focus on the monitoring of teaching and learning.

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

In the recent past pupils have not been making sufficient progress through the school to reach high standards. The school has successfully increased rates of progress so that achievement is now satisfactory. There are examples of good progress, particularly in reading. Nevertheless, pupils are not making consistently good progress across the school because expectations about what they can achieve, particularly for those who find learning easy, are not always high enough. The school's own assessment data and work in pupils' books show that more pupils are reaching the levels expected of them for their age through the school. However, few pupils reach above-average standards. Provisional assessments for pupils who have been at the school for the whole of Year 2 were broadly average in 2009, although they were weaker in mathematics. Because of the legacy of past underachievement, provisional test results at the end of Year 6 in 2009 remain below average, despite increased rates of progress. Pupils who find literacy and numeracy difficult and those who need extra help in order to concentrate on their work make good progress as a result of the additional support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

All aspects of spiritual, moral and social awareness are good. Through assemblies and themed events, pupils' awareness of different cultures is developing well. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is satisfactory. This is reflected in their good behaviour, willingness to work hard in lessons and enthusiasm to join in with all the school has to offer. Pupils participate well in sporting activities. They are particularly pleased with the climbing equipment recently installed in the playground. One pupil said, 'Behaviour is better at break-time because we have more to do.' Pupils are courteous and treat each other with consideration. This contributes well to the harmonious school community. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, as reflected in the school achieving the Healthy School Award. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility as school councillors, house captains, playground mediators and for picking up litter. Good teamwork skills and the satisfactory progress pupils make in their basic skills prepare them soundly for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan interesting tasks for pupils to do and, as a result, they have positive attitudes and enjoy their learning. In a literacy lesson, for example, pupils burst balloons to find words written on paper as part of a task to develop their knowledge of synonyms. Relationships are positive. Pupils enjoy opportunities to talk about their learning in pairs and small groups. This promotes teamwork and good social skills. Some teaching is good, but it is too variable across classes to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress. This is because work is not always challenging enough to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can, particularly more-able pupils. Pupils who struggle with literacy and numeracy are given extra help which enables them to make good progress. The quality of marking is uneven. There are some helpful next steps but marking is not used consistently as a tool to make clear to pupils how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The interesting curriculum reflects the school's commitment to make learning engaging and enjoyable. Visits to local places of interest bring the curriculum to life. Themed weeks, including science and book week, are well planned and include all pupils. Health and fitness week increased pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Pupils have good opportunities to use computers in a variety of subjects. While there are links developing between subjects, these are not consistently in place. A key strength is the extended curriculum with a wide range of after school clubs and sporting activities together with opportunities to take part in performances. Pupils particularly enjoyed the recent 'Leasons Factor' show. Visitors to the school, for example from the local emergency services, promote pupils' good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Some older pupils have recently contributed to a making a short film at the school raising awareness of knife crime. The annual residential visit to an adventure centre in Surrey fosters pupils' independence and helps self-confidence to grow.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has strong links with a wide range of outside agencies to promote pupils' personal development and well-being successfully. This includes good support for pupils who are Travellers. One parent commented, 'The headteacher and all the staff strongly support the Gypsy community.' Vulnerable pupils, as well as their families, are particularly well supported by the family liaison officer. Another parent said, 'I don't know how to thank the school enough for the help they have given me and my family.' Social and emotional development is fostered well through individual and small group sessions with the learning mentor, and through opportunities to talk with trained counsellors. The 'rainbow room' provides valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss any concerns. Pupils are confident that adults will take action should any problems occur. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are rigorous and all members of staff are well trained. The school has good systems to check pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although this information is used particularly well to identify pupils who need extra help with their learning, it does not always ensure more-able pupils are appropriately challenged. Helpful targets ensure most pupils know how to move up to the next level in their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very good leadership. With the support of the strong key leadership team, the headteacher has successfully united the staff and governors with a shared vision for the school. Morale is high. Many new initiatives have been put in place to improve the academic and personal education the school provides and to check pupils' progress. However, phase and middle leaders are not fully involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning. The school has set itself ambitious targets. Swift improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the good development of pupils' personal and social skills, the effective promotion of their well-being, enhancements to the curriculum as well as to the school grounds and the increased involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning, are examples of the school's success. Consequently, its capacity to make further improvement is good. Pupils' understanding of themselves as part of the school and local community is very strong. The school has successfully evaluated its contribution to community cohesion, which is good. This has been achieved by developing and promoting a clear and detailed understanding of its own community and the different groups that exist within and beyond it. The governing body has supported the school well to raise achievement and standards, and governors challenge it when necessary. Governors have also played a leading role in the planned improvements to the school gates and perimeter fencing.

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?	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?	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	3
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	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	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?	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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**

10 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leasons Primary School, Orpington, BR5 2LS

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and seeing all the interesting things that you do there. We were particularly pleased to see you enjoying your new climbing frame and to watch Year 6 making the mosaic that will decorate the front entrance to the school.

Now, I am writing to tell you what we found out on our visit.

Leasons Primary is a satisfactory and improving school and here are some of the most important things about it.

- The youngest children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- Standards have risen and you are making satisfactory progress through the rest of the school.
- You enjoy coming to school and get on well with each other. Your parents told us they like the school a lot, too.
- Through the Spike project, your attendance has improved.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves fit, healthy and safe.
- All the adults are working hard to make sure that you are well cared for and safe.
- You enjoy all the lively activities the teachers plan for you and particularly like the clubs and themed weeks that the school organises.

We have asked the school to carry on working hard to make sure all the lessons are good ones because this will help you learn more quickly. We would like the adults to make sure that you are all set work that is just the right level of difficulty for you. You can help by telling your teachers if the work is too hard or too easy. We would also like all the leaders and managers to do even more to check on the quality of the work the school is doing. Your school is getting better and it is really important that you continue to work hard, and attend regularly and on time.

Thank you again for your help and best wishes in the future.

Yours faithfully

Madeleine Gerard

Lead Inspector