



Lyons Hall Primary School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 131207
LEA Essex

Inspection number 282180
Inspection dates 13 – 14 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs L Blakelock

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	Deerleap Way
School category	Community		Braintree
Age range of pupils	4 - 11		Essex
			CM7 9FH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01376 552393
Number on roll	527	Fax number	01376 552396
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Thorndyke
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr A Smith

Age group	Published	Reference no.
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Children enter with levels of knowledge and skills which are below those of most children nationally, particularly in communication and social skills. A lower than average number have learning difficulties, disabilities or a statement of special educational needs. Fewer pupils are entitled to claim free school meals than the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number for whom English is an additional language are lower than found nationally. A high number of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Although the school evaluates itself as satisfactory, inspectors judge that this is a good and rapidly improving school with outstanding features. Its effectiveness is good.

After a period of uncertainty in the school, the headteacher since his appointment has successfully implemented practices which are now resulting in improved progress by pupils across the school. Therefore, although children start school with below average knowledge and skills for their age, they are making good progress overall. By the end of the Foundation Stage, satisfactory provision means that their attainment is still below expected levels, but by Year 6 they attain overall standards that are above average. Standards in writing, however, need to improve further. The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to outstanding. It is good overall, but needs to be consistently at least good for standards to rise further. A particularly effective feature is the assessment of pupils' work, which is instrumental in the good progress pupils are making. Planning of lessons is also a strength, although teaching in the Foundation Stage does not always make clear enough the purpose of learning activities.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The very effective leadership provided by the headteacher and his deputy, with strong support from the governors and staff, ensures the school is sustaining the rapid progress made and that it has the capacity to develop and improve further. Parents are increasingly involved in and supportive of the work of the school. The school provides good value for money. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

Lyons Hall is a very happy school, providing pupils with a good curriculum. An increasing number and variety of learning experiences and opportunities enable pupils to discover their talents. This leads to outstanding attitudes towards learning. Pupils are looked after exceptionally well and make excellent progress in their personal and social development.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school.
- Make sure planning for learning in the Foundation Stage leads to a clear understanding of what the children will learn in lessons.
- Ensure the quality of teaching and its impact on learning are always at least good throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Pupils are now achieving well from Year 1 to Year 6. Progress this academic year has improved significantly and provisional results for 2006 show a great improvement on 2005 when the progress made by the oldest pupils was broadly satisfactory. The very thorough monitoring by the school of the progress pupils are making is fundamental to their improved performance.

From below average starting points, children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, although many do not reach their early learning targets in all areas of learning. However, when children move into Year 1, they make good progress in all subjects. The standards they reach steadily rise to average by the end of Year 2.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are now above average in English, mathematics and science, with pupils exceeding the challenging targets set. The school is aware that standards in writing are lower than in other areas of learning throughout the school. All groups of pupils have made good progress, with boys making particularly good progress this year compared to last year. Progress in mathematics is now good, especially at Key Stage 2, where results were exceptionally low last year. Pupils with additional learning needs and disabilities make good progress in their learning targets.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. An excellent emphasis on promoting pupils' social skills results in confident, friendly and courteous pupils throughout the school. Their behaviour is excellent and they have very good relationships with staff and one another. Therefore the school is a very happy and caring place in which every pupil makes good progress in acquiring the numeracy, literacy and social skills which will support them in later life.

Pupils' views and opinions are sought regularly. They feel they have a good say in school life via the class and school councils and relish being consulted on numerous issues such as playground equipment and their attitudes to learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and feel there are many people they can go to in school if they are unhappy or have a concern. They love coming to school and this is reflected in the above average attendance figures. The excellent school catering service is one of a number of factors influencing the pupils' outstanding appreciation of how to stay fit and healthy. All pupils enjoy the wide range of physical education activities on offer. Older pupils happily take responsibility for younger children by being play leaders and house captains. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development is good and the school's evident success in promoting pupils' personal development is encapsulated in its code of conduct - 'Be kind, be safe, be responsible.'

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. The quality varies from outstanding to satisfactory throughout the school.

Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and staff work hard to plan practical and exciting activities both indoors and outdoors. However, it is not always clear exactly what children are to learn in particular lessons, which restricts their achievement at times.

Where teaching is outstanding, it is because planning is very detailed and activities are carefully tailored to meet different needs. Relationships are excellent and classrooms have a very positive, purposeful atmosphere, which helps pupils to be extremely motivated and eager to learn. The talented teaching assistants make a real difference to all pupils' progress. The main area within teaching which requires further fine-tuning is the way in which teachers use questions to challenge and engage all pupils.

The school has outstanding procedures to measure and record pupils' progress. The resulting assessment information is used well to ensure that lessons are pitched at the right level to match different learning needs. Pupils are very aware of their learning targets and how they can improve their work.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum is good overall. At Key Stages 1 and 2, this is because of the way in which it fully meets the needs of all pupils. Very good levels of collaboration between teachers, teaching assistants and the special needs co-ordinator are clearly evident in planning and in the systems that have been put in place to monitor pupils' progress. Carefully planned themed and cross-curricular activities make a significant difference to pupils' enthusiasm for learning and, as a result, to the rate at which they learn. The curriculum is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage because the consistency of planning, seen in the rest of the school, is less well developed for this age group. The school's use of information and communication technology in its curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection.

The provision for personal and social education is exemplary, and strategies to encourage the well-being of pupils have been carefully woven into the curriculum. Because of this, pupils learn rapidly and in a safe and healthy environment. The school has introduced an unusually broad range of activities which are additional to, and support the curriculum, and these are having a very positive impact on the confidence with which pupils develop and learn.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

All staff demonstrate very high levels of care and commitment and the personal support and guidance they provide to pupils is outstanding. Rigorous child protection procedures are well known by staff and are implemented very effectively. Risk assessments are completed as necessary and ensure that pupils learn in a safe environment. They know how to get help and advice when they need it. Pupils' learning is assessed very well. There are particular strengths in the target setting arrangements. Pupils have their own targets to work towards; they know what these are and when they have achieved success. The school is very good at helping pupils assess their own progress and this enables teachers to plan for them to reach the challenging academic and personal targets that are set. Overall, the school has excellent relationships with parents and other agencies that enable all adults to work together well to ensure that children learn as fast as possible, for example, those with particular learning needs. Reports about pupils' progress are detailed and of good quality. Considerable care is taken to ensure that the transition to the next phase of education is seamless.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The inspection team judges that the leadership and management of the school are outstanding, although the school evaluated it as good. This rapidly improving school continues to move forwards because the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the governors, has identified the most significant issues which need addressing and taken decisive actions. This is recognised by parents who are delighted with the increasingly good quality of education provided for their children and the way they as parents are involved in the school's development. The school is considerably strengthened by the common strength of purpose. Standards are rising due to skilful strategic planning and rigorous monitoring of the work and performance of the school. In particular, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher show outstanding

leadership in ensuring all the staff feel valued and fully involved in decision making processes and in the evaluation of the work of the school. In return, all the staff are responding to, and thriving on, the challenges and responsibilities the headteacher entrusts them with. Thus, middle managers are increasingly effective in their roles. Staff appreciate the regular monitoring of their work because it leads to further professional development and subsequent extension of their skills. This exercise complements school improvement planning which shows that information from reviews and analyses are used well to plan for future needs. The school has successfully addressed the issues from the last inspection. There is abundant evidence of a good capacity to improve further.

Governance is outstanding. The governing body, led extremely skilfully by the astute chair of governors, has made difficult decisions for the good of the school. Governors challenge the school rigorously in their monitoring role and contribute greatly to its success.

Grade: 1

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	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?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes