

Leigh-upon-Mendip First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123652
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340389
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Harvey
Headteacher	Gill Harry
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons and observed four teachers and two teaching assistants. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. In addition to observing the school's work, the inspector looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan, lesson and curriculum planning and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Twenty nine parental and carer questionnaires were returned and scrutinised by the inspector, who also spoke to a number of parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 in mathematics
- the use of the curriculum as a whole for the application and development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology
- the way staff monitor and evaluate outcomes and provision across the whole curriculum.

Information about the school

This is a very small school. Pupils are taught in two classes, one for the Reception and Year 1, and the other for Years 2 to 4. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average and mostly confined to one year group. The range of these needs includes physical disability, speech, language and communication difficulties, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A pre-school occupies a building on the school site but this is independent provision that is not managed by the governing body.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It has more than maintained the high quality of education seen at the previous inspection and has made further improvements in many aspects of its work. Pupils say they love going to school. High levels of attendance are one illustration of this and it is further endorsed by parents and carers rating their children's enjoyment of school very highly. Excellent provision and outstanding leadership, management and governance result in pupils making outstanding progress and achieving often very high levels in their academic and personal development.

Pupils make excellent progress from the moment they start the Early Years Foundation Stage, where their attainment on entry is broadly at levels expected for their age but with weaknesses in personal, social and emotional development. All aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding by the time they leave the school. Academic attainment is also very strong. Pupils leave the school with high attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There is also sufficient evidence in lessons observed during the inspection to show that pupils' attainment is similarly high in music.

Whilst the headteacher provides excellent leadership and management of the school, one of her main strengths is the way that she has created a strong sense of teamwork. Collaboration is one of the keys to the school's success. In school, this collaboration is ever present between staff, staff and pupils, governors and staff and between the pupils themselves. Two other very significant features of the school are the outstanding teaching, by teachers and teaching assistants alike, and the exemplary quality of the care and concern for the well-being of each pupil. These, above all, are the reasons for the pupils' outstanding achievement.

The school's promotion of equality of opportunity and its readiness to tackle discrimination are outstanding and lead to very harmonious relationships and a strong sense of community. Impressive aspects of pupils' personal development include their excellent behaviour and the way that pupils care for one another. Their moral code is very strong and they place great emphasis on showing kindness. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe at school. They know that they are valued and contribute much to the school community. They love physical activity and have an excellent understanding of its importance and of the need for healthy eating as the basis for a healthy lifestyle.

The emphasis placed on collective responsibility and decision making promotes a continuous drive for improvement. Curriculum development in the form of an imaginative project to develop writing skills has raised pupils' attainment in writing across the school. Evaluation of individual older pupils' weaknesses in mathematics and well-planned learning activities carefully matched to each pupil's needs have significantly

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increased their progress. Such evidence of improvement, alongside the ongoing development of the curriculum as a whole, indicates that the school has outstanding capacity for further improvement.

The current school development plan has priority targets on which all stakeholders, including pupils, have been consulted. The action for addressing priorities is clear but success criteria are not always sharp enough. In some areas, insufficient thought is given to the specific pupil outcomes that should improve through initiatives that are introduced. This limits the extent to which the school can evaluate really accurately the success of some of the proposed new developments. However, this is fine tuning and increments of improvement will inevitably be small because of the high quality of education already in place. The school knows itself and where it can improve very well. The excellent, very supportive, governing body challenges the staff constantly to maintain a momentum of improvement. Governors also ensure that important responsibilities, such as rigorous safeguarding and promoting community cohesion, are well established and highly effective.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Link school development planning more specifically to pupil outcomes by identifying in detail how new initiatives will impact on these and by stating how that impact will be monitored and evaluated.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning was seen in every lesson during the inspection, as were their excellent behaviour and high levels of cooperation when required to work in pairs or small groups. Such positive attitudes are a key reason for their outstanding achievement and high levels of attainment. The ability to work collaboratively has a marked effect on pupils' quality of learning as well as their social skills. □It's your turn now,' was frequently heard in a Reception group investigating the capacity of different shaped containers. A Year 4 pupil showed how he appreciated everyone's ideas when leading a group of younger pupils that was discussing different types of waste that can be recycled.

Pupils generally start school with attainment close to expected levels in most areas of learning. Areas of weakness vary between cohorts. Current Reception-year children started below expected levels in their personal development. In previous years, there have been weaknesses in language development. Weaker areas are quickly overcome and, by making excellent progress, pupils leave the school with high levels of attainment. All groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well in relation to their prior attainment in literacy and numeracy. These include the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, whose outstanding quality of learning owes much to the very high quality of support from teaching assistants.

Pupils appreciate the fact that their views are sought and acted upon. They like the regular consultation with their teachers about their work and what they like and dislike

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about the curriculum. They are very eager to contribute to school life and those with specific responsibilities, such as school councillors or peer mediators, carry out their duties very conscientiously. The school council talked enthusiastically about the role it had played in the process of appointing the new headteacher. Pupils have an excellent understanding of other cultures and faith groups. This and the many outstanding outcomes in academic and personal development mean that pupils are very well prepared for the future and have many skills to help their eventual economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

All teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding. There were many examples of pupils making rapid progress in the course of a single lesson. At the end of one lesson, Reception-year children delighted in showing and explaining their paintings that confirmed how they had gained an excellent understanding of life cycles. Teachers meet the challenge of teaching mixed-age classes with impressive success. This comes from the meticulous planning of stimulating learning activities tailor-made not only to the needs of different groups but also, where necessary, to the specific needs of

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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individual pupils.

These qualities in teaching promote a very high quality of learning. Another key factor is the exceptional quality of the work of teaching assistants. This is highly effective, whether teaching assistants are providing support for an individual pupil, teaching groups or, as was observed in this inspection, when leading a whole-school assembly. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together and there is constant dialogue between them as they plan and evaluate the lessons and continuously assess pupils' progress. This assessment is a major strength. Whilst testing and formal assessment activities provide a regular check on pupils' progress in all subjects over time, it is the ongoing assessment during every lesson that is most impressive. The whole school has adopted the Early Years Foundation Stage practice of recording any relevant observations of pupils' responses to activities. Teachers and teaching assistants discuss these observations frequently and this builds up a detailed picture of each pupil's progress and future needs in all areas of the curriculum.

The curriculum has also been developed along the lines of that in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with subjects grouped into areas of learning. This approach needs time to become embedded but it is already apparent that the range of stimulating topics excites the pupils, is improving skills, knowledge and understanding, and is raising attainment. Special projects also enhance learning. A media arts project adds another dimension to pupils' experiences and pupils talk excitedly about work they have done. The curriculum as a whole is used very well for development of basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

The outstanding quality of pastoral care, guidance and support impacts very well on pupils' personal development, particularly social skills. The needs of each pupil are known and fully met. Several parents and carers have commented on how the school has been quick to give extra help and support for their children whenever they have needed it. The outstanding home-school partnership is one of many collaborations having significant impact on pupils' learning and well-being. All aspects of provision benefit from the school's involvement in the Frome Community Learning Partnership which, for example, enhances the school's work with gifted and talented pupils, and the Forest Schools initiative, and through the writing and media arts projects.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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Drive, ambition and pride in the school are hallmarks of the headteacher's leadership and they are shared by all members of the school community. These qualities have considerable impact on teaching and other aspects of provision and this produces the outstanding outcomes.

Together with the excellent way in which equality is promoted and discrimination tackled, the school also shows strong commitment to promoting community cohesion. The school contributes much to village life working with various organisations and sections of the community. One such enterprise is pupils' work with some villagers on the production of a Cluedo board based on the village. Another is the local Historical Society's work with pupils investigating the school's past. The school has collaborated with two neighbouring small schools and established a link with a large Bristol school within a markedly different socio-economic environment. A series of visits and projects to be undertaken has been planned in order to extend pupils' understanding of other communities in the United Kingdom.

Governors have very effective strategies to make them fully informed about the life of the school and they contribute knowledgeably to planning for school improvement. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and that staff are well trained and vigilant in their attention to health and safety, risk assessment and child protection issues.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding provision and leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation

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Stage help children to progress from the moment they start school. The stage leader has promoted a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff. This helps children's progress to be outstanding and the vast majority of children end the year well above average in nearly all areas of learning. Every opportunity is taken to promote social and language development and this results in exceptional progress in these areas. In all respects, children experience a rich curriculum that, together with outstanding teaching, results in children loving every minute of being at school.

Staff work very closely together, showing exemplary levels of concern for children's welfare. They all carry out ongoing assessment of children's learning by recording observations of their successes and areas for development. This information is used very well to plan activities tailored to the needs of individual children. Children quickly develop the confidence to work independently. They are inquisitive and love learning new things. They talk excitedly about their discoveries. This all stems from learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors being well planned, with an excellent balance of activities led by adults and activities that children initiate for themselves.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspector are very happy with the school and are extremely supportive. They say their children enjoy school and they particularly appreciate that they are kept safe and progress well. Pupils' enjoyment of all that they do at school was very obvious and safety is an absolute priority. Many of the questionnaires had additional, positive comments. Minor concerns that have been raised are specific to individuals.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Leigh-upon-Mendip First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 41 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	97	1	3	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	76	6	21	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	86	3	10	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	79	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	86	3	10	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	76	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	93	2	7	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be. ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leigh-upon-Mendip First School, Radstock BA3 5QQ

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school and for talking so willingly. I thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. I think your school gives you an outstanding education. This is what I particularly appreciated.

- You make outstanding progress and your work is of a high standard in English and mathematics in particular. I was also very impressed by your work in music.
- You are taught superbly and teachers plan an excellent curriculum that gives you many exciting learning opportunities.
- Your behaviour is excellent and I saw how well you all look out for one another. This makes your school a very happy place that everyone enjoys going to.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- You are very good at carrying out responsibilities, such as being a school councillor, and this makes an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- You say you feel very safe in school. This is because all the adults do an outstanding job in looking after you and making sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The headteacher and other teachers provide outstanding leadership and management and all the adults work well together to help the school to improve.

I have asked the school to do one thing to help make it even better.

- When the adults plan new things to be introduced into the school, they must make it very clear how these are going to help you to improve your work or support your personal development.

I hope you will carry on working hard, enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Leigh-upon-Mendip First School to be an even better school.

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