

Lodge Farm Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104215
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	377036
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Kinsey
Headteacher	Ashley Winters
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
School address	Furzebank Way Willenhall West Midlands WV12 4BU
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons and observed 12 teachers and some teaching assistants who were teaching at the time of the inspection. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils as well as speaking to some parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and the arrangements to safeguard pupils. They also looked at the school's improvement plans and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress. Questionnaire returns from 64 parents and carers were analysed as well as returns from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is attainment improving well enough across the school?
- Do teachers place sufficient demands on pupils in lessons to ensure that all pupils reach their expected learning targets?
- Do children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make enough progress in their acquisition of early language, communication and mathematics skills?
- How effective is the leadership team and governing body in monitoring the impact of the school's work on the progress and performance of pupils and staff?

Information about the school

This is a large primary school with an Early Years Foundation Stage comprising a Nursery for three-year-olds who all attend part time, and two full-time Reception classes for four-year-olds. From Year 1 through to Year 6, pupils are taught in nine mixed-age classes. Throughout the school, the large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups are represented by pupils of Indian, African or Caribbean heritage. A very small minority of pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than that of most schools, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The main areas of additional needs include moderate learning difficulties and some pupils who have speech and language difficulties. The school has achieved the nationally-accredited bronze level Anti-Bullying award as well as achieving Healthy School status.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Lodge Farm provides a satisfactory education. Teachers and support staff are committed to pupils' all-round development. This is reflected in the warm and positive relationships that exist between pupils and staff. Parents and carers rightly believe that the staff are approachable and provide a supportive climate for learning. One typical view expressed stated, 'My child enjoys school and looks forward to her lessons. This is a warm and friendly school.'

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics is in line with the national average and is improving. Although satisfactory, some of the teaching is not ambitious enough to ensure that all pupils reach their targets. Inconsistencies in pupils' learning have been more prevalent in Key Stage 1 in recent years as assessments show that too few pupils reach or exceed the levels in reading, writing and mathematics expected for their age. The school's leadership team has begun to address this by recruiting and redeploying staff to raise attainment in Years 1 and 2. This has been successful as current assessments show that the school is reversing this trend of low attainment at Key Stage 1.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teaching is satisfactory overall and ranges between satisfactory and good. The children are given good opportunities to experience a range of stimulating indoor and outdoor activities, which is a good improvement since the school's last inspection. However, the staff are not always extending children's learning or checking assessments enough to plan the next steps for children of different abilities to ensure they all reach their expected targets.

The impact of the teaching on pupils' progress is mixed. In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to read for sustained periods or widely enough to broaden their vocabulary. The most effective teaching is characterised by good pace and challenge for all pupils, with opportunities for them to read aloud, self-correct their writing or check their calculations in mathematics lessons. This is not common practice in some lessons in Key Stage 1, although the staff are reviewing planning and observing stronger teaching to increase the consistency and pace of learning. Across the school, and particularly in some classes in Key Stage 2, the teaching does not offer enough challenge or time for pupils to reflect on their work and assess how well they are doing towards their learning targets. Teachers analyse assessment data about pupils' performance accurately but do not always use this information to adapt the work they provide to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes. Despite these shortcomings, there is an increasing amount of

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good or outstanding teaching to ensure that more pupils reach or exceed the levels expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given appropriate support in lessons that enable them to make satisfactory progress, although they are not always engaged enough or challenged to make more rapid progress towards their targets.

The leadership team has an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to sustain improvements. The staff are increasingly working with members of the governing body to monitor and evaluate the performance of pupils and staff, although this is not always focused on judging the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. The headteacher has fostered a climate of collective responsibility for the progress and performance of pupils and staff. The school is facing up to the challenges of raising pupils' attainment, demonstrating satisfactory capacity to sustain improvements. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress that pupils make in Years 1 and 2 and raise their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics to at least the national average by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to read widely and write accurately
 - giving pupils more time in lessons to practise, apply and improve their number and calculation skills
 - ensuring that all lessons and pupils' learning objectives are sufficiently ambitious to sustain an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching or exceeding age-related levels.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching across the school by:
 - ensuring that lessons provide the right level of challenge for all pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to reflect on and assess their own learning.
- Raise children's attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - using assessments of children's progress more effectively to plan the next steps in their learning
 - assessing and checking children's learning and progress more rigorously to intervene sooner if they fall short of their expected learning targets.
- Ensure that the senior leadership team, staff with management responsibilities and the governing body undertake more robust monitoring of pupils' progress and teachers' performance to secure a sustained rise in pupils' attainment.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are attentive and enthusiastic learners. Their behaviour is satisfactory, including those at risk of displaying challenging behaviour, which is the result of strong pastoral support and encouragement provided by teachers, support staff and learning mentors. Pupils respect each other's views and behaviour in lessons is often good as they are responsive and keen to ask questions. Some of the teaching does not extend pupils enough so they become restless or disengaged as the pace of learning slows.

The most recent national test results show a significant rise in the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, reflecting satisfactory achievement as pupils move through the school. The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books show that attainment is also improving in Years 1 and 2 because of more effective teaching. Despite these improvements, pupils' progress in reading and writing is uneven across classes. There are inconsistencies in the expectations set by teachers and the time provided for pupils to edit and improve the accuracy of their writing. In mathematics, the most effective teaching is raising attainment quickly as pupils are given more challenging problem-solving tasks. Some lessons, however, provide minimal opportunities for pupils to learn through trial and error, self-correct or solve number and calculation problems. Pupils show initiative in lessons but do not always have enough opportunities to work independently for sustained periods, share ideas, or to reflect on their learning. Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. They are keen to participate in class discussions and work with others during group work which improves their spoken English.

Pupils feel safe and trust that adults will deal effectively with the rare incidents of bullying. They know that their views are respected and their efforts valued, with good opportunities to reflect during assemblies and to think of others through charitable fund raising. School councillors, monitors and playground leaders proudly wear their 'badges of office' or 'play-leader caps', taking their responsibilities seriously when caring for younger pupils, or when representing the views of others. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to contribute to their local and wider community through visits and surveys of the local area. Their social and moral development is good, although they are less confident and knowledgeable about the diversity of ethnic and cultural traditions across the United Kingdom. Pupils enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in improving attendance rates. The staff give a lot of out-of-hours time to encourage pupils to be active through sport, special events such as swimming galas and out-of-bounds activities. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of how to adopt balanced and healthy eating habits although this is not always reflected in their choices at snack times. Pupils acquire basic skills and develop personal qualities that prepare them adequately for the future.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The pace of learning is satisfactory in most lessons. Teachers plan their work so that pupils are provided with clear objectives for each lesson. However, some lessons, including a small number where the teaching is inadequate, do not adapt these objectives or incorporate enough work that is tailored specifically to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils. The advice and comments provided in teachers' marking do not always refer pupils to their individual learning targets, making it difficult for pupils to self-assess and understand the next steps. Class discussions are often productive but leave too little time for more focused independent work to extend or deepen pupils' understanding. The most effective teaching, including some that is outstanding, ensures that all pupils are challenged. For example, during a highly effective mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were inspired when working collaboratively for sustained periods to experiment with handling data. There were excellent opportunities for them to assess their own learning. All pupils were engaged because the teaching was more intuitive and sensitive to pupils' stages of learning. This was a model of outstanding practice.

Pupils who find learning difficult are supported by a skilled team of teaching assistants who provide encouragement and direction. Each stage of these pupils' progress is checked regularly but not rigorously enough to ensure that all pupils make enough progress towards their individual targets. There is some consistent and effective teaching by teachers and teaching assistants during 'phonics' sessions (linking sounds and letters) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1

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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when pupils are grouped by ability for more focused work on letters, sounds and spelling. Combined with some stronger teaching, this is contributing to improved attainment in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. In one highly effective writing lesson, pupils were given enough time to edit and improve their work to write more complex sentences.

The curriculum includes opportunities to use information and communication technology, although the pace and productivity of this varies across classes. Topics incorporate a good range of visits to places of interest or outdoor field-work activities, as well as music and sport that broaden pupils' experiences. The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for pupils. There is strong pastoral support, which has a positive effect on pupils' personal and social development. However, there are inconsistencies in the way teachers provide academic guidance through marking and assessment to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Since his appointment just over a year ago, the headteacher has restructured the leadership team to address inconsistencies in the pace of pupils' learning and the performance of teachers and support staff. The governing body supports the school well in many respects, although it has not been as involved as it should be in evaluating the school's performance. Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities on committees and have been particularly diligent in managing the school's budget and securing improvements to outdoor resources.

Members of the senior leadership team contribute towards identifying priorities for improvement, although their management time is not used efficiently enough to measure the impact of the school's work on pupils' attainment, learning and progress. A good start has been made by creating stronger links between governors and staff with management responsibilities. This has introduced a more systematic structure to development planning and monitoring so that the school is now in a stronger position to identify the most important priorities for improvement. Moderation meetings to look at pupils' work are improving teachers' understanding of assessment, although reviews of progress are not robust enough to ensure that all pupils reach their learning targets.

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The school listens to, and acts on, the views of its community, which accounts for the good level of satisfaction expressed in parents', pupils' and staff questionnaires. There is a commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, reflected most in the sensitive care and management of pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils learn about the main world religions with opportunities for them to experience different cultural traditions and learn about religious, ethnic and cultural diversity. Although the staff monitor pupils' progress and performance, the impact of intervention work for pupils with particular learning needs or who come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds is not yet undertaken systematically enough to ensure that they all achieve as well as they can.

At the time of the inspection, requirements to safeguard and protect pupils were being met and in line with statutory requirements. There are good arrangements in place to ensure that only suitable adults come into contact with pupils. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken to ensure that pupils are safe and secure in school.

The staff have established partnerships and effective links with outside agencies and additional welfare services, together with strong home links with families in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Advanced plans are in place to extend these further to include some international links with other schools to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of European and world cultures and languages.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children join the Nursery or Reception classes with skills and aptitudes that are below those expected for their age. Teachers and support staff

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improve children's knowledge of letters and sounds through the consistent teaching of phonics. Although attainment is below that expected in most areas of learning by the time they start Year 1, the children make satisfactory progress. The children settle quickly in both settings and make a good contribution to their classrooms when tidying away or getting themselves ready to play outdoors. Children are keen and inquisitive; for example, when anticipating a visit by the local fire service, some children dressed up as fire officers and talked enthusiastically about how to stay safe during bonfire night this week.

Children make satisfactory progress in their communication and language skills, as well as their development of early mathematics skills. Children in Reception identify letters and sounds in words through songs, nursery rhymes and story books. The staff link these skills well to writing but do not always tailor specific tasks for individuals that will extend their reading and writing skills more rapidly. Warm and trusting relationships ensure that each child is valued and rewarded for good behaviour and effort. Learning is made fun and exciting; for example, when Nursery children counted items of fruit that 'The Hungry Caterpillar' ate during story time to improve their knowledge of numbers and their counting skills.

Assessments are carried out regularly but with insufficient focus on how much progress individual children make in relation to their abilities, leaving uncertainty about the next steps or targets for children to work towards. Children explore and develop their physical and creative skills well using different textures through colour mixing, drawing and painting. In both Nursery and Reception, children benefit from working in the much improved and well-resourced outdoor areas safely and productively, which improves their physical and social skills well. Teachers' planning incorporates time for the children to work and play together during 'child-initiated learning time', where children choose activities for themselves, helping them to generate their own ideas and explore different areas and resources. This improves their confidence and independence, although adults do not question the children enough to extend children's learning or pose more challenging problems for them to explore. The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed satisfactorily and the staff work cooperatively ensuring there is a smooth transition between Reception and Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

One in five parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaires, which is below the national average for primary schools. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires, as well as those spoken to by inspectors, believe that their children are safe and that this is a caring and supportive school. Some parents and carers would like the school to organise parents consultation evenings better so they have more time to talk to teachers about their children's progress. Many paid tribute to the efforts of the staff and noted the improvements made to the school since the headteacher joined in September 2010. Some parents and carers would like more notice of events and school activities, although the school does provide regular newsletters and information.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lodge Farm Junior Mixed and Infant 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 304 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	63	19	30	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	67	21	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	36	33	52	6	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	39	34	53	4	6	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	31	48	28	44	2	3	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	34	35	55	4	6	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	50	29	45	1	2	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)	19	30	40	63	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	36	37	58	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	38	35	55	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	45	23	36	5	8	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	32	50	25	39	1	2	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	56	22	34	5	8	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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 pupils' 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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Lodge Farm Junior Mixed and Infant School, Willenhall
WV12 4BU**

Thank you for your help during the recent inspection and the welcome you gave the inspectors. We have judged that you go to a satisfactory school and make satisfactory progress in your learning. The staff are helpful and very caring, and they are genuinely interested in your welfare and achievements. The headteacher, leadership team and governing body are managing the school satisfactorily to ensure that you continue to improve your work. Although the teaching is largely satisfactory, there are some things that the inspectors have asked your teachers and governors to do to make your school even better.

- Provide pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 with more opportunities to read and write independently, and more mathematics work that will help them to practise their number and calculation skills. Inspectors have also asked teachers to provide work that is not too easy or too hard but is just right for all pupils in both year groups.
- Ensure your teachers give you all the right level of challenge in lessons and more time to check your work so you can understand how to improve to reach your learning targets.
- Ensure teachers and staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage check regularly and carefully to see if all the children are making enough progress. This will help the teachers to plan work for all the children so they make more rapid progress.
- Make sure that those who lead and manage the school regularly check how well you are doing and make sure that every lesson helps you to improve your learning so you can all reach higher standards.

You can all help by continuing to try hard, reading more books and trying hard in lessons every day. I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

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