

# Lodge Farm Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132091
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381443
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 January – 1 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Martin Beale

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	476
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Laurence Martin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Turner and Sue Padfield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Mobbsbury Way Stevenage SG2 0HP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 236600
<b>Fax number</b>	01438 236601
<b>Email address</b>	admin@lodgefarm.herts.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	31 January–1 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381443



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



## Introduction

### Inspection team

Martin Beale	Additional inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional inspector
Ronald Elam	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Over 15 hours was spent observing parts of 23 lessons taught by 18 members of staff, holding discussion with pupils about their learning and hearing pupils read. Inspectors held meetings with staff and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised pupils' books, assessment data and case studies of specific pupils. They also looked at evidence of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. The inspection team analysed 251 responses to the questionnaire returned by parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds in this larger than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. In the last three years, there has been an increase to broadly average in the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This includes a small number on the Autistic Disorder Spectrum. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has a co-headship arrangement, whereby the headship is shared by the substantive headteacher for four days each week and the co-headteacher on the fifth. The school meets the current floor standard.

The school hosts an after-school club. This provision is not managed by the governing body and as such is inspected separately.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Lodge Farm is a good school. It is improving under the drive and determination of the headteacher and co-headteacher. High expectations reflected in challenging targets are the driving force behind the school's success. This, coupled with rigorous monitoring of performance, accurate self-evaluation and well-planned actions to tackle key priorities, give the school strong potential to meet its ambitions.
- Achievement is good and improving. A slight dip in Year 6 performance in 2011 has been tackled head-on. Attainment is rising again because progress is good and accelerating. A gap in the attainment between girls and boys in English, which emerges early in the school and continues to Year 6, is starting to close.
- The steady improvement in attainment in writing at Key Stage 1 is now filtering through to Key Stage 2. There are many opportunities for pupils to extend their writing but the development of numeracy and the use of technology are not planned systematically across subjects.
- Good teaching and an interesting range of activities, such as the recent Year 6 science workshop on 'flight', underpin the pupils' good progress. The best lessons drive learning forward at a rapid pace because activities are chosen carefully to meet the pupils' particular needs. However, questioning is not always used skilfully enough to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. Marking has improved but is variable in its use as a tool to support pupils in taking the next steps towards their personal targets.
- Pupils of all backgrounds work and play happily together. They show great respect and interest in other cultures and customs and develop a strong moral code. The pupils' good behaviour makes the school a harmonious and purposeful environment in which to learn and develop.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Prepare and implement a plan by September 2012 so that pupils systematically develop and apply their numeracy and technology skills across subjects.
- Improve the consistency of marking and feedback over the next two terms, particularly in mathematics, so that pupils understand the steps they need to take to meet their targets.

- Introduce a training programme for the start of the summer term in 2012 to develop teachers' questioning skills.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Parents and carers are accurate in their opinion that their children are making good progress. From skills on entry below those expected for their age, children make rapid progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because they are taught well in an interesting and purposeful environment. Their knowledge of the links between sounds and letters develops quickly and Reception children were seen to turn confidently to the interactive whiteboard to find the correct words containing the 'sh' sound. This good progress in reading continues across the rest of the schools that attainment is slightly above average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6.

Number and calculating skills develop well from simple counting activities in the Nursery through to Year 6 pupils accurately using decimals and percentages. They apply these skills in mathematics to solving problems, interpreting graphs and handling data, such as when Year 6 pupils created a 'human pie chart', but pupils have limited opportunities to apply their numeracy in other subjects. They write creatively in a range of subjects and in different styles from stories, letters and poetry to persuasive texts made more interesting by adjectival clauses and similes. However, this is not always in a cursive script and some presentation can be untidy.

Focused support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and some newly introduced intervention programmes underpin the good progress made by these pupils. The careful assessment of the specific needs of autistic pupils and strong relationships with their support staff enable them to participate fully in lessons and to make good progress towards their targets.

Year 6 test results fell in 2011 to broadly average. Robust action to improve teaching and to focus more sharply on pupils at risk of falling behind their targets is already starting to bear fruit and attainment is rising again. The strategy of deploying teachers to different year groups to make the most of their strengths has reduced some uneven progress at Key Stage 2. There are no patterns to any differences in achievement over time by ethnicity. A sharper focus on boys' writing in Reception, providing more engaging and boy-friendly books and finding contexts for writing that are more immediate, is having a positive impact. Boys are becoming keener writers and starting to develop a greater enjoyment for reading, although not as much as girls at Year 6.

### **Quality of teaching**

The inspection agrees with the judgement of parents and carers that their children are taught well and their individual needs are closely met, a view expressed also by the pupils themselves. Much teaching is lively and promotes the pupils' spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development well by giving them the opportunity to reflect on their thinking and to use their imaginations. The benefits of working together and discussing ideas were seen when Year 6 pupils thoughtfully debated 'the pros and cons' of a landfill site in preparation for writing a persuasive letter to the council.

Typical of the most effective teaching seen was that when Year 4 pupils wrote a sequel to the story of 'Mufaro's beautiful daughters'. Challenging questions reflected the teacher's high expectations and her dynamic delivery and use of examples moved learning forward at pace. Pupils were very clear about the purpose of their writing and how to make it more interesting. However, teachers do not always question as skilfully as here to check and probe pupils' understanding or to adapt their lessons in the light of pupils' responses.

The careful balance between activities directed by the adults and those where the children take responsibility for developing their learning are key features of the effective teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults take every opportunity to develop and extend the children's speaking and listening and make observations of the children at work so they can plan the next steps in their learning.

The marking of writing helps the pupils identify what they have done well and where improvements could make their work better. Marking is less helpful in mathematics. Furthermore, teachers do not always provide time for the pupils to respond to comments, to correct their work and see the progress they are making towards their targets.

Effective methods are used to teach reading. These include well-taught sessions developing letters and sounds for the younger pupils and guided reading lessons to stimulate an enjoyment of books as the pupils get older. Small group work and individual reading to an adult helps older pupils, who are not reading at the level expected for their age, to catch up. Careful adaptations to the planned curriculum such as these enable teachers to meet the needs and abilities of pupils more closely.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Parents and carers strongly agree that a good standard of behaviour exists throughout the school, which is a view largely shared by their children. Pupils are courteous towards adults and each other in the classroom, around the school and in the playground. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They listen attentively, ask and answer questions confidently and persevere with their work, although at times they lose concentration when teaching is less engaging. Attendance is above average, but the school has identified that it could be higher for some boys along with their punctuality. By working with the families concerned, the gap between boys' and girls' attendance is closing.

Pupils respect the high expectations for their behaviour from the headteachers and all staff. They feel that the behaviour policy is fair and consistently enforced helping to modify the behaviour of a few pupils who occasionally misbehave. 'The Fridge' is a facility much valued by pupils to which they can self-refer if they feel they need time to reflect and 'cool-down'. Pupils report that any isolated incidents of bullying are resolved quickly. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds say they feel free from

racism in school and pupils from all backgrounds worked and played happily together. Peer mediators take great pride in helping to resolve issues between friends if they fall out. Inspection evidence confirms that the good behaviour seen at the time of the inspection is typical, that behaviour over time is good and incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare.

Pupils say how safe they feel in school, which is a view overwhelmingly supported by their parents and carers. Pupils are very aware how to keep themselves safe when using new technology and the internet, and through road safety training. Pupils feel valued and undertake their responsibilities such as play leaders with pride.

## **Leadership and management**

The co-headship arrangement is working well because both headteachers share a vision for the school's future and work with success to ensure high quality teaching. There are many examples to show how individual coaching programmes, including opportunities for teachers to work alongside experts, have improved teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is used as an effective tool to identify where action is needed. Because leaders and governors use this information to plan in detail to tackle key priorities, improvements over time, such as in writing, have led to higher standards. Subject leaders are fully involved in leading developments in their areas and as such are a further factor in the school's good capacity for further improvement.

The curriculum contributes greatly to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies and well-chosen texts that enable pupils to reflect on life and its cultural diversity. Learning is enriched by additional activities such as when the pupils helped in constructing the impressive statue of 'The Gruffalo' now standing in the entrance area.

The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements are rigorously implemented. The careful analysis of assessment data has enabled leaders to focus action to improve achievement, particularly for boys in English. The co-headship team is committed to narrowing gaps in learning and ensuring that the school is a harmonious and tolerant community. In this way, they promote equality and tackle discrimination well. Parents and carers are very positive not just about the quality of leadership but also the strength of the partnership between home and school. The well-attended 'Celebration of Learning' session encouraged parents and carers to view their children's learning and to develop strategies to help them more at home.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Lodge Farm Primary School, Stevenage, SG2 0HP**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We saw that you work hard and inspectors were impressed by your confident answers to their questions. We found that Lodge Farm is a good and improving school. These are the things we liked most.

- As you told us, the headteacher, staff and governors do their utmost to help you all to succeed, to take care of you and make sure you are kept safe.
- Your positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour contribute significantly to making the school calm and happy.
- We agree with you that you are taught well. Teachers make lessons interesting and help you to make good progress.
- Your writing has improved considerably because you are given opportunities to develop your skills in a wide range of subjects.
- The youngest children have a good start to school life in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and deal with any risks you might face.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given effective support so that you make the same good progress as others in your classes.

We have asked the school to improve learning further by ensuring that teachers use questions to make you think more deeply, give you time to respond to their marking, and provide opportunities for you to use numeracy and computer skills across subjects. You can all play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale  
Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**