

Littleton Green Community School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124088
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380798
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Krishan Sharma

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	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Jennings
Headteacher	Lynn Small
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Krishan Sharma

Additional inspector

Paul Delbridge-Smith

Additional inspector

Sue Rath

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 21 lessons or part of lessons taught by 13 teachers. They heard two groups of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils read. Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding records, the school development plan, a summary of self-evaluation, pupils' written work and the tracking of their progress. Inspectors analysed 67 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Littleton Green Community is larger than the average primary school. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. Very few come from minority ethnic groups and almost all of them speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special needs is well above average, but it is close to average for those with a statement of special educational needs. The school holds Healthy School Status, Activemark in recognition of its promotion of sport and is a Dyslexia Friendly School. The governing body runs a wrap-around provision for 3-4 year-olds.

The school has not met the current floor standard, which is the government's minimum expectation for attainment and progress.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	4
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

- The overall effectiveness of Littleton Green School has declined since its previous inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. Insufficient progress has been made in tackling the key areas identified for improvement. Senior and other leaders and the governing body have a more favourable, but inaccurate view of the school’s overall performance because of the lack of rigour and accuracy in the school’s self-evaluation. Consequently, the school does not demonstrate the capacity for further improvement.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they begin Year 1 having attained levels that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. Although there are signs of modest improvement, particularly in Key Stage 1, pupils’ progress in English and mathematics remains insecure as they move up the school. As a result, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has remained consistently low and represents inadequate achievement given pupils’ starting points.
- Teaching is inadequate overall because of insecure subject knowledge in the teaching of mathematics, insufficient challenge in a minority of lessons which does not extend pupils’ prior learning and some unnecessary repetition of what pupils already know.
- Pupils behave acceptably in lessons, but around the school there are occasions where they lack self-discipline and mutual respect. Both parents and carers and pupils have justified concerns about behaviour. A small minority of pupils say that they do not feel safe at school. Attendance is improving and is now slightly above average due to the school’s persistent actions.
- Leaders and managers have not been able to secure improvement in the quality

of teaching and achievement. New middle leaders are keen to make an impact, but their monitoring and evaluation skills are underdeveloped.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and their attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - improving their oral skills in explaining what they are learning in lessons and how well they think they have done
 - increasing the application of calculation skills in all their mathematical work and in other subjects
 - reinforcing their comprehension skills in reading fiction and non-fiction texts.

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by January 2013 by:
 - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics
 - extending pupils' prior knowledge and skills through challenging tasks that match the needs of all pupils and help accelerate their progress over time
 - eliminating unnecessary repetition of what pupils already know and can do
 - improving the deployment of teaching assistants so that they make a more effective contribution to pupils' learning and progress.

- Improve pupils' behaviour around the school by:
 - promoting respect for each other, all adults and the environment
 - teaching pupils how to make a positive contribution to the school's management of behaviour
 - reviewing the effectiveness of current strategies for managing pupils' behaviour.

- Bring rigour and accuracy to the school's self-evaluation by:
 - focusing on evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress during lesson observations and in the scrutiny of their written work
 - sharpening the monitoring and evaluation skills of leaders at all levels.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are usually below those expected for their age. From these starting points, they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and currently leave Reception with broadly average attainment. From then on, pupils make inadequate progress as they move up through the school and they leave the school with low attainment in English and mathematics. Their progress remains consistently below that of all pupils nationally, although it is weaker in mathematics than in English. This means pupils are insufficiently equipped for the next stage of their education. Many parents and carers feel that their children make good progress at school. The inspection evidence does

not corroborate this view.

Pupils' learning and progress in lessons show that some improvement is beginning to take place, but it is at a pace that is insufficient to narrow the gap between pupils' current attainment and that of pupils of their age nationally. In lessons, teachers guide pupils on how to plan and structure their writing. As a result, their writing skills are improving, although standards remain significantly below average. The regular teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) is beginning to have an impact on pupils' reading skills, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and reading is improving. The guided reading sessions are promoting pupils' comprehension skills across the school but they are not yet secure and standards in reading remain significantly below the national average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. In mathematics, pupils' learning and progress remain insecure because the teaching of mathematics is fragile. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical and calculation skills are increasing but are not as strong a feature in pupils' learning as they need to be.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive additional support through a range of interventions, including booster sessions and one-to-one support. The close attention being paid to meeting their needs contributes to their steady progress. Like other groups in the school, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the main, they are not making the expected levels of progress. The school has consciously focused on improving the achievement of pupils of average capabilities, which form a majority in most cohorts in the school, but many of them continue to make insufficient progress, given their starting points. However, the vast majority of more-able pupils make the progress expected of them relative to their starting points.

Quality of teaching

Too much teaching is satisfactory and it is not good enough to accelerate pupils' progress and narrow the gap between their attainment and that of pupils of their age nationally. The planned curriculum has little impact in moving pupils' learning on. Few good lessons were seen in Key Stages 1 and 2 during the inspection and the absence of good teaching is at the heart of pupils' inadequate progress and their persistently low attainment over time. While parents and carers as well as pupils feel satisfied with the quality of teaching at school, the inspectors did not find evidence to support these views and judged the overall quality of teaching to be inadequate.

However, some good teaching was seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults in the Nursery use all opportunities to extend children's learning, for example, in one session they encouraged them to count fruit for their picnic and to match it with numbers on cards. Children were pleased with their success in counting.

In the inadequate lessons, teachers plan insufficiently challenging tasks and so do not advance pupils' learning from what they already know and can do. There is often unnecessary consolidation of previous knowledge and skills and pupils' engagement wavers. As a result, pupils make limited progress. Often, in these lessons, there are limited opportunities for pupils to discuss and to explain what they have been learning, and how well they have done. This hampers their learning and progress in

speaking, listening and presentational skills. In some lessons, the teaching assistants are not sufficiently active in promoting pupils' learning and progress.

In the satisfactory lessons, teachers remain focused on enabling pupils to make at least satisfactory progress towards the goals set for them. Their comments on pupils' performance in lessons are precise and clearly communicate what they have achieved and what they have not. Teaching makes an inconsistent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In all lessons, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work on their own and with others which promote pupils' social skills and contributes to their acceptable behaviour in lessons. However, this does not always have sufficient impact on pupils' behaviour outside the classroom. The inclusion of diverse languages such as Urdu, German and Spanish in the school's enrichment curriculum introduces pupils to other global communities. Pupils respond well to the regular specialist provision for sports and music, which encourages wide participation.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are inadequate. Pupils and their parents and carers expressed concerns about typical behaviour at the school in their responses to the inspection questionnaires. Pupils repeated some of these anxieties during their discussion with inspectors. The inspection confirmed their concerns were well-founded, particularly about pupils' behaviour around the school. Pupils have not been taught how to help improve the behaviour of everyone. Instances of a lack of mutual respect or respect for adults were evident. This disrespectful climate results in some pupils feeling uncomfortable and unsafe at school, although most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children are safe. In the recent past, there have been high levels of exclusions, which are currently at a much lower level, due to the school's adherence to its behaviour management strategies. Prejudice-based bullying of any kind is rare and is dealt with well when it occurs. The school ensures that pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are given a secure environment for learning and new arrivals to the school are made welcome. Attendance is continuing to improve due to the school's active and persistent actions. As a result, currently and for the first time in many years, the rate of attendance is slightly above average.

Inspectors found pupils' behaviour in lessons to be acceptable and the environment for learning was mostly free of disruption. Even so, there are instances when pupils display a lack of engagement with their learning. On occasions this happens when the quality of teaching and the curriculum fail to maintain their interest. However, pupils are emphatic that behaviour in lessons is not always good and that sometimes learning is disrupted. Pupils were eager to explain to the inspectors that some pupils had learnt to 'play the game' with the school's current behaviour management strategies. For example, the award of three yellow cards and one red card as a sanction for unacceptable behaviour gave them access to the inclusion facility in the school, which they described as a 'fun place' to be in, and that this arrangement was seen as a reward.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, intend to improve standards of pupils' attainment and their personal development. These good intentions are reflected in the priorities the school has set for itself. However, so far, they have not been realised. The benchmarks used to evaluate the success of school development priorities are not always clear or measurable. Similarly, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' written work are insufficiently focused on pupils' learning and progress and are, therefore, not robust enough. This means the school has an inaccurate view of its effectiveness, particularly of teaching and pupils' behaviour. Consequently, the school has lacked and still lacks capacity for securing and sustaining improvement.

The governing body has not held the school to account for its inadequate performance over time. However, recently it has become more active in asking questions of, and seeking answers from, senior and middle leaders. New middle leaders in literacy, numeracy and the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the special educational needs coordinator are ready for the challenge, although they have varying levels of expertise in their monitoring and evaluation roles.

The school's curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils. It also does not provide a secure grounding for pupils' acquisition of skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. In lessons, there are some opportunities for pupils to learn to work in groups, including the small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. The school has taken active steps to make pupils aware of the cultural diversity around them. For example, teachers who visited India have followed up their visits through project work with pupils. The use of imagination and creativity is encouraged through art and music. Overall, however, the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a limited impact on their personal development and the quality of relationships within the school.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Systems to ensure equal opportunities involve the regular collection and analysis of data to monitor the progress of different groups. As many pupils with average ability continue to underachieve, the school has not yet been able to promote equal opportunities adequately for all groups of pupils. The wrap-around provision provides a safe and secure learning environment where children's skills in all areas of their learning are further consolidated.

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).

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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Littleton Green Community School, Huntington, WS12 4UD

Thank you very much for helping us during the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed looking at your work and talking to you about it. We think your school has a lot of things to improve and for this reason we have decided that it needs 'special measures'. This means that it will get help to make the improvements needed. Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

- Those of you who go to Nursery and Reception make good progress.
- You attend school more regularly now.
- Your skills in reading, particularly linking letters and sounds, are getting better.
- You enjoy sport and other physical activities.

To improve your school further, I have asked those in charge to make sure that:

- you make faster progress in English and mathematics than you do now
- most of your lessons are the best that they can be
- those of you who find behaving well difficult, particularly at play and lunchtimes, get the help you need to improve your behaviour
- all of you are taught how you can contribute to improving the behaviour of everyone
- school leaders check thoroughly your learning and progress when they visit your classrooms or check your written work.

Of course, you also have a role in improving your school. For example, it would be most helpful to your teachers, and other pupils too, if all of you could behave sensibly around school and not make others feel uncomfortable. Some of you can take a lead in this and help others to learn to behave well.

Yours sincerely

Krishan Sharma
Lead inspector

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