

Linton Heights Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110672
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	356794
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Vivienne McTiffen

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carolyn Babinsky
Headteacher	Jennifer Malone
Date of previous school inspection	8 January 2008
School address	Wheatsheaf Way Linton, Cambridge CB21 4XB
Telephone number	01223 892210
Fax number	01223 890059
Email address	office@lintonheights.cambs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons and two assemblies were observed. Nine teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils, a parent, and school leaders, including members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at information on pupils' progress, school development planning, incident logs, safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from 73 parents and carers, 102 pupils and 23 staff.

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

- Is the quality of teaching and use of assessment consistently good enough to ensure all pupils make the progress of which they are capable?
- To what extent does the curriculum provide opportunities for pupils to apply skills in different subjects?
- How effective are the school's measures to promote good behaviour and positive attitudes towards others?
- How effectively do managers and leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school and instil a common sense of purpose in securing improvement?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized junior school. The majority of pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, but numbers are increasing year on year. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and the proportion of those from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school achieved the national Healthy Schools status in 2010. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

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

This is a satisfactory school which places high priority on the safety of its pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe. They show good understanding of unsafe situations because this is addressed well by the curriculum, especially in information and communication technology (ICT). That view is supported by parents and carers, one of whom comments 'What my son has learnt in ICT recently was significantly important...and highlights that he retains what he is learning.'

Pupils enjoy helping others and improving the school. Those in the school councils are proud of their contribution. Pupils speak enthusiastically about creating the school pond area. They raise funds, deciding for themselves who will benefit, and run a fruit tuck-shop. Their healthy choices at lunch time and good levels of participation in sporting activities promote pupils' well developed understanding of how to stay healthy. Spiritual, social and cultural development is good. Pupils engage keenly in new activities and work together well, especially with partners. They understand and accept each other's differences. Less well developed, for a very small minority of pupils, is the understanding of the consequences of their actions and its impact on others. That leads to variable behaviour, although behaviour is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, some good examples were seen of pupils with behavioural difficulties responding very well to the school's behaviour strategies, but these are not used consistently enough to ensure that good behaviour is maintained at all times. There is some way to go to ensure the school's new behaviour policy is understood fully by staff, pupils and parents and carers.

Since the last inspection, the school has improved the monitoring of teaching and learning. Better monitoring means teachers are better informed about how to improve. Although teaching is judged satisfactory overall, the proportion of good teaching is increasing. The best learning takes place when pupils are motivated and enjoy tasks. In those lessons, the pupils like the level of challenge, work keenly and make good progress. In some cases, teachers use assessment information well to match work to pupils' ability, but inconsistencies mean that work is not always pitched suitably to ensure all pupils do as well as they can. Pupils evaluate each other's work and judge for themselves how well they are doing, but they are not given sufficient guidance by their teachers on how to improve. A good start has been made in linking subjects together to make lessons more exciting, but opportunities for pupils to show creativity and flair are too limited.

Attainment is average and pupils make satisfactory progress from their average starting points. There is clear evidence that progress is accelerating and attainment rising, especially in English. That is due to a range of methods to promote speaking, reading and writing so that pupils apply skills for a range of purposes. For example, in a good literacy lesson, the pupils composed lyrics for songs to convey strong messages. In mathematics, pupils acquire number skills which they use in problem-solving work.

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The headteacher has successfully built a strong leadership team with a clear focus on development. Much has been achieved, especially in improving teaching and tracking pupils' progress. In light of this, and of current plans, the school is suitably placed to sustain improvement. The headteacher recognises the importance of developing the monitoring role of subject leaders so they can form a view of the quality of teaching and learning. The governing body is supportive and has a good understanding of the challenges facing the school, but its systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's work is underdeveloped, as is its work in promoting community cohesion. Whilst links exist with schools abroad, the school is at the early stages of devising ways to engage more fully with a range of community groups locally and further afield. The school seeks the views of parents and carers and there are clear lines of communication. A small proportion of parents and carers feels insufficiently informed about their children's progress or how to support learning. That is because there are not enough varied and frequent opportunities to enable them to be involved in their children's learning or understand how well they are doing.

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?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to be consistently good by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information to plan for all ability levels and help pupils to understand how well they are doing and how to improve
 - ensuring behaviour strategies are applied consistently and understood fully by staff, pupils and parents and carers
 - motivating pupils to learn through a range of activities which enhance enjoyment and allow talents and creativity to flourish.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - engaging parents and carers more fully in their children's learning so they understand what children are doing and how much progress they are making
 - developing the monitoring roles of subject leaders and the governing body further to evaluate learning and the work of the school more effectively
 - establishing links beyond those already in place to promote community cohesion more fully.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' academic skills and personal qualities equip them suitably for the next stage of learning. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very few who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, in line with their peers. They receive one-to-one support from teaching assistants often and participate in group work matched to their needs. The school monitors the progress of specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those identified with specific gifts and talents, to ensure that they make sufficient progress.

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

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Most pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy setting their own challenges and working together particularly, especially when they devise their own methods of working. For example, during an outstanding mathematics lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm inspired them to investigate numbers by creating their own codes. They worked on ever-increasing numbers and confidently applied their knowledge of factors and prime numbers, resulting in a buzz of activity. At the end of the lesson, pupils explained their findings to the class and judged for themselves how well they had done. They expressed enjoyment of the task and were reluctant to stop working. At other times, when activities are less interesting, pupils do not apply themselves so readily and attention wanes.

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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers encourage pupils to work together and share ideas. They make good use of ICT and often relate learning to real-life situations. For example, in a good literacy lesson, pupils explored the use of language in advertising. The teacher provided a variety of resources to stimulate imagination and promote varied use of words. The well-paced lesson kept pupils on their toes because of a good level of challenge, leading to some interesting written work. In lessons where the pace is slower, pupils' interest is not sustained and expectations of what all abilities can achieve are not high enough. That is

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because teachers make insufficient use of assessment information to plan for the next stage of learning and set the right level of challenge in lessons.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs adequately. Literacy and ICT are used well across subjects, although there are fewer opportunities to apply mathematical skills. A range of popular clubs, some organised in partnership with sports providers, enhance provision and add to pupils' enjoyment. Staff are working with other schools to prepare for a more creative approach to curriculum planning in a bid to develop pupils' skills and talents more fully. Effective pastoral care supports the needs of pupils, often through links with external agencies, especially for those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. That is an established part of the school's provision and leads to positive outcomes in attitudes, behaviour and well-being. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are suitably supported, although the school lacks a way to systematically judge the impact of the support on learning. Good transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils prepare them for the next stage of their education. Links with the infant school are developing in order to ease transition for pupils entering Year 3.

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?

Leaders share a determination to improve the school. The headteacher identifies the main priorities for development and sets realistic and achievable targets. Positive steps are being taken to secure high-quality teaching in order to raise attainment and improve progress. In light of recent staff changes, the school is working on ways to involve staff fully in a common sense of purpose to work together towards improvement. The performance of different groups of pupils is monitored to identify any underperformance. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are recorded stringently and discrimination tackled. The governing body carries out its duties satisfactorily. It sets up 'focus groups' to engage parents and carers more fully in the work of the school and ensures that pupils and staff are safe by thorough review of policies and procedures. There are well-developed systems for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils which ensure that safeguarding procedures follow good practice. Safety issues, for example when using technology, are addressed in the curriculum, resulting in pupils' well-defined understanding of how to stay safe. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. Links with schools in France and Uganda aid pupils' understanding of belonging to a wider community, but the school is not evaluating the impact of its work systematically.

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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

Views of parents and carers

Most questionnaire returns from parents and carers agree that the school keeps children safe. The majority of those who responded disagreed that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Observations of lessons, assemblies and playtimes indicate that the school has strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors identified the consistent application of these strategies by some staff as an aspect needing improvement. A minority of returns expressed concern over the amount of progress children make. Inspection findings show that pupils make at least satisfactory progress, with clear evidence that progress is accelerating and attainment rising. A minority feels insufficiently informed on progress and how to support learning. Those are identified by inspectors as areas for further development. A minority disagrees that the school is led and managed effectively. Discussions with leaders and staff and satisfactory outcomes for pupils indicate that the school has satisfactory management systems in place. One parent commented 'The headteacher is very responsive to parents and communicates in a professional and business-like manner, whilst retaining the necessary level of empathy and care for the children and their families.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Linton Heights Junior 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 231 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	14	43	59	13	18	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	21	29	49	67	2	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	9	12	48	66	14	19	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	10	36	49	21	34	5	7
The teaching is good at this school	11	15	46	63	12	16	3	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	10	43	59	14	19	5	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	10	46	63	17	23	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)	9	12	43	59	8	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	11	39	53	17	23	6	8
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	14	21	29	22	30	16	22
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	14	28	38	16	22	6	8
The school is led and managed effectively	12	16	25	34	15	21	12	16
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	16	30	41	18	25	8	11

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 2010 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.



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Linton Heights Junior School, Cambridge, CB21 4XB

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed seeing you at work and talking to you about your school.

You attend a satisfactory school. By the time you leave, you reach the levels expected for your age in English and mathematics. Some of you are beginning to do even better, especially in English. You say you enjoy taking on responsibilities and, when we observed your lessons, we noticed you enjoy learning particularly when tasks are interesting and challenging. Your school is good at making sure you stay safe. Your behaviour is satisfactory, but we think it can be better.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to make the following improvements:

- make sure teachers match work to your abilities and help you to understand how well you are doing and how to improve
- make sure you and your parents and carers and teachers understand the school's rules for good behaviour so everyone can apply them in the same way
- give you more activities which motivate you to learn and help you develop your talents and creativity
- help your parents and carers to understand your learning and let them know more often how well you are doing
- make sure all those in charge monitor how well you and the school are doing
- establish more links with the local community and others beyond your school.

All of you can help the school to achieve these things by realising how important it is for you always to be on your best behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Vivienne McTiffen

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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