

The Lancaster School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120686
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380089
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Tim Bristow HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucy Redfern
Headteacher	Jane Metcalfe
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. Inspectors observed six teachers and visited 13 lessons. They held meetings with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, assessment information, lesson plans, school policies and responses to questionnaires from 27 parents and carers and 11 staff.

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

- Are the recent improvements in attainment being sustained this academic year by good quality learning for all groups in lessons?
- How effective is the school in managing the challenging behaviour and low attendance of a very small minority of pupils?
- Does the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the quality of provision warrant a judgement of good or satisfactory for overall effectiveness?
- Are school leaders demonstrating good capacity for school improvement?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized infant school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are above average. A minority of pupils experience circumstances that may make them vulnerable.

The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status. It has recently gained the Investors in People Bronze level and the Arts Mark Silver level awards. The school works in close partnership with a local infant and junior school. Some resources and staff are shared, such as the special educational needs coordinator and the newly appointed family support worker. Pupils benefit from a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides pupils with a good education. All the main aspects of provision are good. This ensures that pupils are well cared for and that their achievement is good. As one parent reported, representing the views of many others, 'This is the third child we have sent to the school and we love it. All children have enjoyed attending and all have done really well.'

Pupils make good progress and attainment is average overall. The attainment of boys has risen strongly over the last three years because of the good progress they make in lessons so that their attainment is now broadly average. In reading and writing, girls perform better than boys because they make faster progress in lessons. School assessment information and pupils' work demonstrate that the school is well placed to sustain this rising trend in attainment for all groups of pupils because of good teaching and learning in lessons.

Children benefit from a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The good progress that they make continues into Key Stage 1 because in lessons teachers are effective in ensuring that work is pitched to the right level for nearly all pupils. Improvements to the curriculum in English have better engaged boys in their learning. For example, the well-structured reading lessons with carefully chosen books appeal to boys. However, there are insufficient practical activities that are linked to the development of pupils' writing skills to fully engage boys in writing. Some aspects of care, guidance and support are very strong, for example, the procedures for nurturing and safeguarding the significant proportion of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. These procedures have resulted in good behaviour and improved attendance that is average overall. Determined efforts by the school have resulted in a rise in attendance by the very large majority of pupils whose attendance is either average or above average. There are still, however, a few pupils who do not attend as regularly as they could.

The headteacher provides very effective leadership and is well supported by other school leaders and the governing body. Robust procedures to check the work of the school have driven important improvements in teaching and learning since the previous inspection and resulted in the better achievement of all groups of pupils. For example, accurate measures to check the progress of pupils have ensured that all groups make good or outstanding progress as well as identifying where further improvements to provision can be made. School leaders demonstrate a good capacity for future improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the attainment and progress of boys in reading and writing matches that of the girls by:
 - enriching the curriculum with practical activities that the boys will be enthusiastic to write about
 - identifying and implementing the good practice in the partner school that has narrowed the gap between boys' and girls' achievement.

- Improve the attendance rate to average of a few pupils by:
 - engaging more effectively with the few families who have difficulty ensuring their children's regular attendance
 - working closely with partner schools to establish a common policy for attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Until this academic year, the large majority of pupils entered Year 1 with attainment in reading and writing that varied from below to well below national expectations. All groups of pupils make at least good progress and some do outstandingly well. For example, assessment information for the pupils eligible for free school meals who left Year 2 this year shows that some made outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment was above average. Each year, assessment information shows that by the end of Year 2, attainment in mathematics is average or above for all groups of pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those who exhibit challenging behaviour, make good progress as a result of the highly effective care, guidance and support that they benefit from.

In lessons, pupils engage enthusiastically and creatively with their work. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were drawing maps showing where Shrek lived. They were very interested in features such as volcanoes and windmills which they chose to add to their well-drawn maps. Pupils cooperate well in lessons and are kind and considerate to each other. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were discussing the story of the Three Billy Goats, they worked well in pairs to think of words to describe the troll. Pupils' work shows that their writing skills are improving fast because of good teaching in lessons, but occasionally some boys make less progress than the girls because they are expected to sit for long periods which they find boring.

Pupils feel safe in school and can demonstrate a good understanding for their age of road safety and 'stranger danger'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are respectful to each other and show tolerance and care for the few pupils who occasionally have difficulty behaving appropriately.

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Members of the school council make a good contribution to the community. For example, by ensuring that pupils have someone to play with at break-times. Pupils have a good appreciation of other cultures and demonstrate a very welcoming attitude to the very small minority of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. Pupils spoken to assert that they prefer to eat fruit, recognising the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods. They also report that the daily 'Activate' sessions are the best part of the day because they really enjoy the exercise.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good use is made of assessment information to plan lessons so that nearly all pupils make good progress. Teachers regularly check the progress of pupils during the lessons ensuring that good quality learning takes place. For example, in a Year 2 writing lesson the teacher moved from pupil to pupil questioning and challenging them very effectively in order to help them improve their work. Teaching assistants are generally used well to ensure small groups of pupils make good or outstanding progress. Occasionally, in the few lessons that are satisfactory, teaching assistants are too supportive when working with groups and do not challenge pupils to work independently.

Exciting activities, such as the creative arts week where pupils learn about art from different countries, has enriched their learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school trips, for example, the recent visit by Year 2 to Lincoln Castle. They report that they would

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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like to take part in more visits. Reading and writing have improved strongly in the last two years because of improvements to the literacy curriculum that provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in other subjects.

A very effective partnership with two local schools has ensured that the care, guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very good. Pupils’ needs are met swiftly because of the very effective special educational needs coordinator who knows the families of these pupils and their specific needs very well. The governing body and staff demonstrate a high degree of expertise when safeguarding and caring for those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school is particularly effective in supporting those who have difficulty behaving appropriately. One example of this care is the breakfast club that gives pupils a good start to the day, preparing them well for learning. There has been a recent increase in school in the number of pupils new to the country. Their parents and carers report that the welcome and care that they receive from the school has been excellent. School leaders report that raising the attendance rate is a problem for the three schools in partnership. Leaders have rightly identified the need to adopt a common approach to raising attendance further.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Middle leaders demonstrate that they are effective at driving improvements to provision and outcomes. For example, they have been responsible for leading the improvements to progress and attainment in reading and writing and for provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteacher regularly checks and challenges school leaders to ensure that the improvements that are planned are successful. The work of senior leaders is underpinned by a good development plan and related procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The governing body is very good at fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, particularly with regard to safeguarding. Members are becoming increasingly effective at holding the school to account for the improvements to the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.

The acceleration in the progress of boys, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is successfully narrowing the gap between their attainment and that expected nationally. Consequently, equality of opportunity is good. This is further enhanced by

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the very strong partnership with the local junior school. The headteacher of this school reports that the excellent transition arrangements in place between schools has been instrumental in ensuring that when all groups of pupils leave Year 2, the disruption to their progress is minimal and boys soon catch up with girls in Year 3. School leaders have rightly identified that good practice to ensure boys make the same progress as girls should be shared between schools. There are few racist incidents because of the high quality of the personal, social and health education where pupils learn to celebrate each other’s differences.

Safeguarding systems are very well established. Staff are well trained and procedures such as the single central record of staff are exemplary. The school has worked extremely hard to promote community cohesion, particularly with the few families that are hard to reach. Regular courses for parents and carers take place to encourage them to participate in school life and to help them to support their children’s learning at home. A regular programme of visitors from other countries, and an enriched curriculum that celebrates different religions and cultures within British society promotes community cohesion effectively to pupils. All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that they are happy with their children’s education.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Assessment information shows that the skill development of children has declined on entry to Nursery year on year. Last year, nearly all children entered with skill development that was either below or well below expectations. In particular, children’s language and physical development is very low. In contrast, attainment by the time children enter Year 1 has risen each year. For the first time this year, the

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large majority of children entered Year 1 with skills in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement. Most children behave well, play cooperatively and are confident to talk to adults. Staff ensure that children are well cared for and new arrivals to the Early Years Foundation Stage have settled in very well in such a short time since the start of term. Children were observed thoroughly enjoying the exciting activities where they developed their literacy and numeracy skills when learning about dinosaurs. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been effective in ensuring that children make good progress. For example, the excellent learning logs that assess and record progress for each child keep parents and carers well informed about their children’s progress as well as ensuring that provision is tailored carefully to meet the needs of each individual.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

In their response to the questionnaire, parents and carers showed a high level of support for the work of the school. For example, they all agree that they are happy with their children’s experience at school, that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. There were hardly any concerns about the school expressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Lancaster 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 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 118 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	15	56	12	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	63	10	37	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	67	9	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	18	67	8	30	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	52	10	37	2	7	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)	14	52	10	37	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	16	59	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	56	11	41	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	44	12	44	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	63	10	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	20	74	6	22	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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.



16 September 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of The Lancaster School, Lincoln, LN6 0QQ

If you remember, I came with another inspector to inspect the work of your school and to check how well you were doing. Thank you for the help you gave us, we found you to be very polite and kind. I am very pleased to report that we found that you are doing well. You can be very proud of the good and outstanding progress you are making. Nearly all of you work very hard in lessons. The girls are doing very well indeed. Boys are trying very hard, but I have asked the school to find ways to encourage you to be more interested in writing. We found that your behaviour is good, even for the few of you who find this hard. You work well together in groups and are caring and considerate to each other. It was really great to see how much you enjoy taking part in daily exercise like 'Activate'. We were a bit disappointed that a few of you do not come to school every day, but we realise that because you are quite young that this is not really your fault.

You go to a good school where you are very well cared for and where the headteacher and staff try extremely hard to make your lessons and other activities exciting and interesting.

In order to help you do even better, we have asked the school to:

- find ways to improve boys' reading and writing so that it is as good as the girls'
- make sure that all of you come to school every day.

You can help by continuing to try hard with your reading and writing and by coming to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow
Her Majesty's Inspector

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