

Litton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112886
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378595
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2012
Lead inspector	Mary Hinds

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Cunningham
Headteacher	Bridget Hanley
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mary Hinds

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed ten lessons or part lessons taught by two teachers and one teaching assistant. Meetings were held with staff and governors. The inspector observed the school at work, talked to groups of pupils and listened to them read. The inspector examined a range of documentation including safeguarding policies, improvement plans, samples of pupils' work, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' progress. The inspector analysed the questionnaire responses from 40 parents and carers, 41 pupils and eight staff.

Information about the school

Litton Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average primary school. Virtually all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, including those who receive additional external support or have a statement of special educational needs. Many of these pupils have specific or moderate learning difficulties. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has achieved Basic Skills, Healthy School Status, Active Mark, Eco-schools and International School award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Litton is an outstanding school where all pupils achieve exceptionally well to reach consistently above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. One parent sums up the school well saying: 'This is an amazing school. My children are incredibly fortunate to be able to attend such a well-run, family-orientated school with approachable and caring staff.'
- From broadly average starting points, pupils' attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of both key stages continues to rise and is significantly above the national averages, particularly in reading.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers match work precisely to pupils' individual levels of ability and understanding. Although teachers have an excellent understanding of what pupils need to complete by the end of the lesson, they do not always enable pupils to identify the steps they need to take to improve further.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Older pupils relish the additional responsibilities that they are given as school 'cabinet ministers'. They are excellent role models for the younger pupils. All pupils have mature and confident attitudes to their learning.
- The headteacher's ambitious vision is shared by all staff and governors. Leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching by recruiting only the very best practitioners and using their expertise to maximum effect. Regular checks are made on teaching and learning which are then linked to targeted support and advice for staff in order to secure outstanding provision. The curriculum is imaginatively planned, with a wide range of exciting experiences that make learning purposeful and relevant. The quality of music makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Nevertheless, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their excellent mathematical skills in problem-solving situations to consolidate and extend their understanding further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase opportunities for pupils to be more independent in their learning by:
 - ensuring that, together with their teacher, pupils identify clear steps to success so that they are better able to assess what they have achieved and what they need to do next
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to develop and deepen their mathematical skills in problem-solving and real-life situations.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children's skills and experiences when they start in the Reception class vary significantly: for example, in recent years children's social skills and early reading and writing skills have often been lower than expected. Children make good and often rapid progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, their skills and development in all areas are broadly average. The stimulating learning environment provides children with opportunities to choose their own activities, developing their confidence and independence. For example, children are self-sufficient in deciding how many pebbles they will need to share in order to create equal sets. One pupil skilfully and accurately shared 20 pebbles to create two equal sets of 10 and discussed with an adult how he counted carefully in order to be fair. This, together with more structured learning alongside adults and older pupils, results in high levels of engagement. Older pupils and adults provide highly effective modelling of behaviour and language. The teaching of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) is regularly and systematically taught and, as a result, children's early reading skills are exceptionally well developed. Throughout both key stages, pupils' progress continues to accelerate in all subjects, so that by the time they leave the school in Year 6 attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading is a significant strength of the school, and attainment in all core subjects, including reading, is also above average by the end of Year 2. This is the result of the school's success in developing a love of reading. Classrooms and the library have colourful and inviting areas to read, displaying a variety of different books. Pupils talk with enthusiasm and excellent knowledge about different types of writing and authors. During daily, dedicated reading sessions at the end of lunchtime, pupils have stories read to them by lunchtime supervisors, read to one another and to teachers, and read silently. One pupil in the Key Stage 1 class delighted in talking about how funny the dog was in a 'Hairy Maclary' book with another pupil. She read fluently and together they discussed and laughed about the dog's adventures.

There are no significant differences in the progress that different groups of learners make, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who also make excellent progress. The school tracks and evaluates the progress individual pupils make meticulously and they keep very detailed records. This ensures that any potential underachievement is swiftly identified with appropriate interventions put in

place to accelerate progress. The inclusion leader rigorously tracks, implements and reviews all individual programmes and activities for pupils with learning and social difficulties. The small classes and high adult to pupil ratio provide pupils with individualised, well-balanced support and challenge which has a significant impact on pupils' confidence and self-esteem. One parent's statement reflects almost all of the parents' and carers' views, saying: 'My child has made fantastic progress both academically and socially. He has made good friends and loves coming to school.'

Quality of teaching

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are well informed about pupils' abilities. Planning meets individual needs precisely. It also ensures that learning has a clear structure and builds successfully on what pupils already know and what they need to do next in order to secure rapid progress. Staff work highly effectively as a team. Teaching assistants work with small groups and on a one-to-one basis. This flexible arrangement makes an excellent contribution to the rapid rates of progress, particularly for those pupils with learning difficulties.

In lessons, on-going assessments are used well to adjust the pace and focus to ensure the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers are highly skilled in modelling learning. They use questions effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to rehearse, consolidate and to extend their understanding. These interactive sessions mean pupils are active, highly motivated and collaborative learners. Learning is in a relevant, purposeful context and there are some inspirational cross-curricular links. This helps pupils to practise and extend their basic skills, particularly their literacy skills. For example, pupils received a 'letter' from a village resident who complained about the school's choice of songs and music. The complainant stated that the school's music was in their opinion too 'popular' and did not allow pupils to appreciate classical music. Pupils went on to produce highly persuasive letters, eloquently explaining that their choice of music allows them to explore, respect and value others. Pupils were encouraged to use their powers of persuasion orally and through writing. They were also asked to identify for themselves what they would need to include in the formal letter in order to achieve the learning outcome. This lesson enabled pupils to explore spiritual and moral issues through music and their response to it. However, inspection evidence shows that there are still too few opportunities for pupils to decide with their teacher what steps they need to do in order to achieve the learning outcome and to use this to assess their own progress.

Work in pupils' books provides a wealth of evidence of a powerful and exciting curriculum. For example, pupils explore electricity and pneumatic systems to create robots in design and technology lessons. The teaching of science is also a considerable strength, with a significant focus on developing pupils' enquiry skills. These investigative and practical experiments provide pupils with outstanding opportunities to apply their mathematical skills, to be able to hypothesise, to plan experiments, to evaluate and to appreciate the complexity of nature both inside and outside the classroom. This, together with the wealth of musical experiences, contributes substantially to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Nevertheless, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop and deepen their

mathematical understanding in problem-solving contexts on a more regular basis.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Attendance remains consistently above average. Pupils are exceptionally polite and considerate. They demonstrate consistently high levels of engagement and cooperation in their lessons and around the school. Pupils display a mature sense of right and wrong and enjoy both giving and receiving praise for behaviour and effort. In one assembly, pupils listened with sustained concentration to an outstanding solo violin performance, spontaneously applauding. All parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the behaviour of pupils and are confident that the school deals effectively with bullying. Pupils expressed no concerns about behaviour or bullying, in fact they were adamant that there is no bullying. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and are aware of different types of bullying. Weekly 'Lessons for Life' for Key Stage 2 pupils provide guidance on road safety, first aid, health issues and anti-bullying. Older pupils explained with considerable pride that they are role models for the younger pupils, and enjoy helping them in lessons and on the playground by organising the play equipment. Pupils described a harmonious and calm environment, but candidly stated that there is the occasional fall out, but they usually make up and are friends again quickly. The school's records indicate that incidences of bullying of any type are extremely rare.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has worked with determination to ensure that all pupils make outstanding progress and that teaching is of the highest calibre. She is exceptionally well supported by a very experienced governing body whose members use their wide range of expertise to provide strategic direction for school improvement. Staff morale is high and all share the headteacher's commitment to excellence. She has cultivated a reflective and collegiate approach among staff which drives professional development with a willingness to learn from each other, as well as sharing the best practice in school.

The school works closely with other local schools and capitalises on any opportunities to improve pupils' experiences still further, for example, by additional physical education lessons with a coach at a local secondary school. Promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work, creating a highly positive and harmonious atmosphere. Members of the governing body are as keen as staff to promote equality through regularly monitoring the progress of all pupils. Subsequently, Litton is a truly inclusive school in which there is no evidence of discrimination and all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are totally integrated into the school. The school is also at the heart of the local community, having close links with the village church. Partnership with parents is strong and they are extremely appreciative of everything the school offers. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are met.

A considerable amount of work has gone into improving the curriculum which now provides memorable experiences for pupils and promotes their spiritual, moral, social

and cultural development exceedingly well. Self-evaluation is accurate, although a little modest in some areas. This excellent track record of improvement, together with robust monitoring, focused improvement planning and a quest for continuous excellence, illustrates an excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



10 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Litton CofE Primary School, Buxton, SK17 8QU

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I came to visit your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you all and a special 'thank you' to the school cabinet for providing me with so much information. This is what I found out about your school.

- Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to provide you with the best education possible. They take great care of you and want to see you all achieve the best that you possibly can.
- In Reception, you get off to a good start and you make outstanding progress as you pass through the school. By the time you leave school, almost all of you are achieving higher standards than most other schools. This is because your teachers teach you very well and also because you work very hard.
- I was very impressed by the way some subjects in your curriculum are linked together, which makes your work so interesting, and how quickly you become confident readers.
- You behave exceptionally well and have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Learning in your school is fun. Your teachers plan exciting and challenging activities for you which help you learn quickly and which you really enjoy.

Although you do go to an outstanding school, your inspirational headteacher, governors and staff still want the school to get even better. I have asked them to make sure that you are even more independent in your learning by allowing you to identify with your teacher exactly what you need to do to achieve the learning objective. I have also asked them to make sure that you have more opportunities to use your amazing mathematical skills not only in science but in other exciting situations. I know you will continue to do your very best at Litton and I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds
Lead inspector

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