

Linden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120068
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	393509
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	Ken Buxton HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	447
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Paula Wadsworth
Headteacher	Zaheer Mohamed
Date of previous school inspection	6 April 2011
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	10–11 July 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ken Buxton

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Curd

Additional Inspector

David Bowles

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspectors visited 23 lessons and observed 15 teachers. Inspectors also made shorter visits to classes to observe staff supporting small groups of pupils. A number of pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 were heard reading. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, members of the interim executive board (IEB), staff, pupils and parents and carers. They also observed the school's work and looked at numerous documents, including the improvement plan, progress reports, minutes of the IEB's meetings and records of pupils' progress. As the visit was planned as a fourth monitoring visit, the school was not required to send out parental, pupil or staff questionnaires. However, inspectors considered responses to the questionnaire circulated to parents and carers by the school in advance of the visit. In planning the inspection, they also took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey.

Information about the school

Linden Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the large majority are of Indian heritage. Just over 75% of pupils speak English as an additional language with about 5% at an early stage of learning English. Gujarati and Punjabi are the most common first languages spoken. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average. The school operates a breakfast club for pupils at the start of the day.

At the last inspection, in April 2011, the school was deemed to require special measures because significant improvement was needed in relation to safeguarding, leadership and management and teaching and learning. Since that inspection, a considerable amount of work has taken place to improve matters and thereby raise pupils' outcomes. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected for attainment and progress.

The school holds a number of awards including Artsmark and Healthy Schools status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school that has improved over the last 15 months. Although there have been important improvements in teaching, provision and leadership, the school is not yet outstanding because some inconsistencies in practice still remain and procedures to improve behaviour around the school have not been fully established. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.
- Pupils achieve well. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has risen to be slightly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an improvement on the previous year and reflects the school's efforts to strengthen the quality of teaching and thereby increase the rate at which pupils learn.
- Teaching across the school is good. An increasing number of lessons are good and a few are outstanding. As a result of the improvements in teaching, pupils enjoy coming to school and pupils' progress has accelerated.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils generally display good attitudes to learning and engage well in lessons. However, on occasion, the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of pupils outside the classroom has a negative impact on pupils' enjoyment of school.
- The quality of leadership and management of the school is good. Leaders are providing a concerted approach to strengthen the school's overall performance. While their efforts to manage teachers' performance have improved the quality of teaching and other aspects of the school's work, not enough has been done to build improved communication with all parents and carers and thereby strengthen relationships. The school's good capacity to improve has been demonstrated by the improvements in pupils' achievement and attendance.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' behaviour so that it is at least good by:
 - monitoring and analysing when and where behavioural incidents occur and taking action to reduce their occurrence
 - ensuring the IEB hold the school to account for pupils' behaviour
 - communicating regularly with pupils, parents and carers about pupils' behaviour.

- Strengthen communication links with parents and carers by:
 - increasing parents' and carers' involvement in the IEB
 - developing further opportunities for parents and carers to engage with the school
 - identifying and embedding strategies for engaging positively with families, particularly those that are more difficult to reach.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

At the last inspection, pupils' outcomes were inadequate. Pupils made inadequate progress and a significant proportion of pupils underachieved. Since then, the school has worked hard to improve matters, which has resulted in pupils making faster progress and thereby accelerated learning. This improving picture has been observed at each successive monitoring visit. The inspection evidence fully supports the view of a very large majority of parents and carers who, in response to the school's questionnaire, agree that pupils are now making good progress.

Inspectors observed pupils working well in class. They take an increasing pride in their work. As a result, the quality of work in books has improved and is now good, with pupils taking greater care with presentation. Their work shows the good progress they have made over time. For example, the quality and neatness of pupils' handwriting shows how, in a relatively short time, improvement has been achieved. Importantly, pupils enjoy school and find many of the lessons interesting and the activities fun.

Children joining the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from an environment that has been transformed into a bright and stimulating area. Staff work well together to ensure that children get off to a good start, as many begin school with skills lower than might be expected for their age, particularly with their language and personal, social and emotional development. The carefully structured programme of activities ensures that children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.

In both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are making faster progress than previously. Pupils' attainment in both key stages has improved and is now above average. As a

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result, pupils are the equivalent of about a term ahead of most pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils enjoy reading and gain pleasure from books. In 2012, more pupils than previously attained Level 3 in Year 2 and Level 5 in Year 6, which confirms that more-able pupils are being suitably challenged. Good support and carefully planned interventions ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are enabled to make good progress and attain well. Similarly, there is little difference in the performance of other groups, with boys and girls attaining equally well. However, pupils who speak English as an additional language do especially well due to the early intervention they receive on joining the school.

Quality of teaching

The strong focus on improving the quality of teaching is the main reason why pupils' outcomes have improved. There is now far greater consistency in the quality of lessons being taught. This is because teachers plan lessons that identify exactly what pupils are expected to learn. There is a strong and appropriate focus on teaching pupils to read. Teaching assistants play a crucial role working with and supporting individual and small groups of similar ability pupils. Lessons also build well on previous work as teachers have become more skilled at assessing pupils' prior learning and identifying their next steps. Similarly, there is a greater emphasis on determining pupils' attainment and teachers are increasingly accurate at assessing the level at which pupils are working.

The majority of lessons are good. This means that inspection evidence supports the views of most parents and carers. There is no inadequate teaching. Where teaching is satisfactory, this is mainly because the pace is slower than necessary and a few pupils lose interest. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because of the tailored support they receive, which promotes independent learning and encourages positive behaviour. As a result of the improving quality of teaching over time and the interesting learning experiences being provided to deliver the curriculum, most pupils speak positively about school. They particularly enjoy lessons that are matched carefully to their interests and experiences.

An increasing number of lessons exemplify opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. In two very different science lessons, pupils used their mathematical skills well to record their observations. In one lesson they were accurately measuring the length of their arms and legs and, in the other, pupils used data-logging equipment to measure light intensity. Teachers are increasingly building in opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a Year 4 religious education lesson, the teacher skilfully drew pupils' attention to the similarities and differences between Muslim, Hindu and Christian religions. All the adults in the room were thoroughly involved with the pupils as they answered questions and explained, in very appropriate terms, the meaning behind different religious ceremonies. The high quality displays around the school also exemplify how pupils have been taught about different cultural events. Pupils respond with excitement to the school's productions.

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During the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 performed *Macbeth*.

Teachers' marking shows pupils what they have done well and how they could improve. Homework is set to build on and develop work in lessons. This approach helps families to support pupils' learning and also raises awareness of work being covered at school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The majority of parents and carers are generally positive about pupils' behaviour. However, a very small minority are concerned about inappropriate behaviour. These views are mirrored by the pupils who say that a small minority do not always behave well at breaktime. No incidents of poor behaviour were observed during the inspection. In fact, inspection evidence confirms that pupils behave well in lessons and lessons proceed smoothly with minimal interruption. Pupils display good attitudes to learning and cooperate well when asked to work in pairs or groups. They respond well to instruction and are respectful to adults. They take care with resources and equipment and are proud to be at the school. The school's behavioural procedures are clear and understood. Pupils are knowledgeable about different forms of bullying and are confident to approach adults if they have any concerns. Pupils say that there is little bullying in the school and that adults act quickly if problems arise.

School records are maintained to monitor incidents of inappropriate behaviour. These record incidents of mostly name-calling and playground games being disrupted. However, the information gathered is not used to analyse when or where incidents arise. As a result, the school has not taken strong enough action to reduce the number of incidents and thereby address the issue highlighted by a few parents, carers and pupils.

Almost all parents and carers are confident that their children are safe at school. Pupils also acknowledge that they feel safe and well looked after. As a result of the school's efforts to raise pupils' knowledge and understanding of what constitutes unsafe situations, pupils are well aware of dangers that they may encounter. Staff know the pupils well, which supports pupils to feel looked after and important. The breakfast club and after school clubs also contribute well to pupils' feeling of being well cared for.

Following the school's concerted effort to reduce levels of absenteeism, pupils' attendance has improved over the last year and is now above the national average. Similarly, the level of persistent absenteeism has dropped, as fewer pupils are taken out of school for extended holidays.

Leadership and management

Leaders have been instrumental in bringing about improvements in teaching and the curriculum. As a consequence, pupils' needs are being met well. Learning is focused around topics, which enables links to be made between different subjects. Activities

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are planned carefully to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils, thereby tackling discrimination successfully. The curriculum includes a strong focus on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit from developing a good understanding of British culture while learning from one another about their different religions and heritage.

Senior leaders are ambitious for further development and have high aspirations for the school. These objectives, which are shared across the school through an effective performance management system, are used well to support the school's improvement plans. Responsibility for driving improvement is shared widely across the school, with named staff taking the lead role implementing change. Phase leaders make an important contribution to improvement. Working closely with those teachers for whom they are responsible, they monitor pupils' progress regularly and hold them to account for pupils' development.

The IEB provides a strong lead in promoting improvement and it works closely with leaders to monitor progress being achieved. However, it has not involved parents and carers enough, especially those who are harder to reach. Parents and carers are not kept fully informed about efforts to improve behaviour and the IEB does not do enough to hold the school to account for pupils' behaviour. Nevertheless, the IEB has an accurate knowledge of the school's situation and a clear understanding of what still needs to be achieved. It ensures safeguarding procedures meet regulatory requirements.

Since the last inspection, when relationships between the school and some families and members of the local community were strained, some effective action has been taken to improve matters. There is an increasing level of parental involvement in the life of the school with different activities and events being organised. This has had a positive effect. However, there is still not enough done to overcome the remaining barriers that still exist between a very few families and school.

The school's performance management arrangements are being used well to identify professional development needs. Links are being developed with neighbouring schools that have been recognised as delivering outstanding practice. Staff are motivated to continue improving their teaching skills, having already benefited from the support they have received. The positive impact of this can be seen in the more consistent practice and good teaching. In this way, the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further towards its goal of becoming an outstanding school.

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.

12 July 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Linden Primary School, Leicester, LE5 6AD

It was a pleasure for the inspection team to see you all doing so well when we visited recently. As you know, we visited right at the end of term just after you had finished sports day and were getting ready to perform *Macbeth*, which we thought was performed really well.

This letter is to thank you for contributing to the inspection and also to confirm the very good news that you go to a good school that no longer requires special measures. We will therefore not need to visit your school every term as we are confident that the headteacher, staff and interim executive board are able to continue improving the school without any further intervention from Ofsted.

We were particularly pleased to see how well you are working and that the quality of your work has improved. You told us that you enjoy learning because the lessons are fun and interesting. We agree. The majority of lessons are good. That is because you are being taught by a strong team of teachers and teaching assistants, who work together very well.

You work together cooperatively, so that you learn well from one another, including about each other's cultures and religions. Your manners and the way you relate to other pupils and adults are good, and you behave well in lessons. However, because some of you expressed concerns about pupils behaving inappropriately outside of the classroom, we have asked your teachers to check what is happening and, when required, take action to resolve matters satisfactorily. We have also asked that the school increases its efforts to promote successful links with families. You can play a part too by playing together well and always bringing any incidents of inappropriate behaviour to your teachers' attention.

I hope you will be pleased with this very good news and that you can celebrate this achievement with the headteacher, staff and the interim executive board. It has not been easy so I do want to acknowledge the tremendous effort that everyone, including you, has played in the school's success this year.

Yours sincerely
Ken Buxton
Her Majesty's Inspector

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