



Inspection report

The Latimer Primary School

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 119903
LEA Leicestershire

Inspection number 275305
Inspection dates 25 and 26 May 2005
Reporting inspector Mr A Gray HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Latimer Street
School category	Community		Anstey
Age range of pupils	4 to 11 years		Leicester
			Leicestershire
			LE7 7AW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 236 2138
Number on roll	263		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr M Hotson
Date of previous inspection	January 2002	Headteacher	Mr S Williams

Age group	Published	Reference no.
4 to 11 years	30 June 2005	275305

Introduction

When the Latimer Primary School was inspected in January 2002, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on eight occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in May 2005.

Description of the school

The Latimer Primary School is situated near the centre of Anstey on the outskirts of the City of Leicester. It has extensive grounds and its own indoor swimming pool. Most pupils have had some pre-school education and their attainment is broadly average on entry to the reception class, although they come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. There are 263 pupils on roll, which is bigger than average, although numbers have fallen recently. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 4.8%, which is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is low. Eighteen per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is similar to the national average.

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Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

The Latimer Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils overall, but there is some exceptionally strong teaching. Although many of the pupils are now making good progress and some attain above-average standards, standards are too low across the school because of the unsatisfactory progress made by the pupils in Key Stage 2 over the last four years. Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is sound. Class sizes are large by national standards, but the accommodation is generally adequate, except in part of Key Stage 1. Resources are at least satisfactory, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is often very good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, is good. There is no structured provision for their personal, social and health education, and, although the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, the school's systems to support these themes are insecure. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall; it is good in Key Stage 2, where there is a significant proportion of very good teaching.

The leadership provided by the headteacher and his senior leadership team is good. The senior managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses which they have used to devise a strategic plan for the school's continued improvement. The deputy headteacher leads by example through his excellent teaching. The management of English and mathematics is good but that of the other subjects is inconsistent, though satisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory: some of the governors are very committed to the school's improvement, and their ability to monitor its progress and hold its leadership to account is improving.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection of January 2002, which required the school to address key issues concerned with the quality and effectiveness of its leadership, unsatisfactory teaching and learning, the raising of standards and pupils' progress in all subjects, and the improvement of the learning environment. There has been very good recent improvement following significant changes in the school's leadership, and there has now been at least satisfactory progress in respect of all the key issues. Work remains to be done to ensure that the standards attained reflect the potential of the pupils, especially in the first years of their schooling, that standards are consistently high in all subjects and to raise more of the teaching to a good standard.

Capacity to improve

The school has demonstrated the capacity to tackle weaknesses in teaching and in pupils' learning. Its self-evaluation is accurate, realistic and based on sound evidence of progress.

The school has effective assessment systems which allow it to evaluate its performance and plan for improvement. The headteacher has developed a coherent plan for the school's future development. He, together with the deputy headteacher, sets appropriately high expectations and the staff include several who are highly effective teachers and role-models. Secure foundations have been laid to ensure that the school's progress can be sustained.

What the school should do to improve further

The key priorities for the school's development plan are to:

- use the examples of very good teaching in the school to ensure that the overall quality of teaching continues to improve;
- continue the work being done to improve pupils' progress across all subjects;
- provide a curriculum structure that ensures the teaching of all appropriate aspects of personal, social and health education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Achievement and standards

The school's results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2004 were above average in reading and mathematics, and well above it in writing. When compared to schools in similar socio-economic circumstances, standards were broadly average. The school was particularly successful in the proportion of its pupils who attained the higher Level 3 in all subjects, which was well above the national figures.

The results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2004 were below average overall although they varied sharply between subjects. Whereas standards were broadly average in English, they were below average in science and well below average in mathematics. Compared with the previous year, there was a slight improvement in the results in English and mathematics, but not in science. Standards overall were well below the average for socially similar schools. Progress between the ages of 7 and 11 was unsatisfactory as it was well below the rate found nationally; this was especially the case in mathematics and also for the less able pupils in English.

Standards in lessons were broadly in line with national age-related expectations.

Personal development

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good, both in and out of the classroom. There have been no exclusions during the current school year. The school is a well-ordered community where most pupils understand what is expected of them. Their attitudes and

behaviour were at least satisfactory in all lessons and they were good in approximately half. A survey by the school showed that the pupils' attitudes to work have improved sharply in the last year. In general, the pupils' behaviour was better than their attitudes to learning, because some teachers did not allow pupils sufficient opportunity to contribute to or organise their own learning.

Attendance last year was 94.2%, which was similar to the national figure and has risen slightly this year. The school has satisfactory systems for monitoring the pupils' attendance and for challenging any absence. Parents are contacted when attendance falls below an agreed standard.

The pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are well cared for and there is a good system to support their development, particularly in their relationships. There is a school council and fortnightly meetings of class councils. The pupils are able to share their views through a pupil survey. The school is making satisfactory progress in encouraging a healthy lifestyle, including in diet. A small part of the weekly curriculum is set aside for a course in creating effective relationships, but personal, social and health education is fragmented across the curriculum and arrangements to ensure its effective delivery are unsatisfactory.

The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school has identified multicultural work as an area for development, but systems for ensuring that spiritual, moral and cultural issues are dealt with regularly by class teachers are insecure. The school has good contacts with local churches, which have contributed to the effective use of assemblies for spiritual development, including acts of collective worship that are appreciated by the pupils. The school has been successful in promoting pupils' environmental awareness.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 17 of the 19 lessons, including 6 in which it was good or better. Four of the lessons were very good and one lesson was excellent. In the best lessons the teachers set and maintained a very good pace. Expectations were high, and the pupils enjoyed being challenged. Planning and teaching took skilful account of the pupils' individual learning needs. The teachers were confident in their subject knowledge and understanding. Carefully structured tasks allowed the pupils to experience a range of different ways of learning. Appropriate emphasis was given to the development of the pupils' speaking and listening skills. Overall, lessons were planned purposefully, working towards clear learning outcomes. In the very best lessons the teaching inspired and excited the pupils, leading them to make very good progress. Weaker features of a few lessons included an over-reliance on teacher talk at the expense of the pupils' participation, unsatisfactory use of oral questioning, lack of timing to ensure appropriate pace, and insufficient awareness of the pupils' misunderstandings resulting in inadequate progress.

The school has taken a series of effective actions to tackle the unsatisfactory teaching. Careful attention has been paid by the senior leaders and other key staff to identifying the

elements of good teaching. The school has implemented suitable structures to support the staff's professional development. Combined with good opportunities for the staff to play a part in determining the direction of the school, this has led to a greatly improved focus on teaching and learning. A thorough and well-written policy makes the school's expectations for teaching and learning very clear. The school understands the important role that ICT can play in the development of good teaching and learning and has considerably improved its use.

The pupils' progress was satisfactory or better in 17 of the 19 lessons, including 6 in which it was good or better. Progress was very good in three lessons. Many of the pupils showed good learning skills: they listened well, moved quickly and calmly between one activity and the next and concentrated for appropriate periods of time. Almost all of the pupils co-operated well with each other, working effectively in pairs and in groups. In the best lessons the pupils' progress was assisted by the teachers' judicious use of individual literacy targets. In Key Stage 2 the pupils were keenly aware of these targets and often referred to them without prompting. When learning was good or better, the pupils had well-developed independent learning skills which helped them work at a good pace without relying on adult assistance.

The school's actions to improve the quality and impact of assessment are increasingly effective. Robust analysis of data in English and mathematics is used to inform medium and long-term planning. Pupils' progress is rigorously tracked and appropriate actions are taken to tackle underachievement. The use of assessment data in other subjects is less well developed, but the school is moving towards a more analytical approach to gauging the pupils' progress across the curriculum. The deputy headteacher and the co-ordinators of the core subjects and assessment have a very good understanding of the way in which assessment should be used to ensure that the pupils make appropriate progress; they demonstrate very good leadership and management of these areas of the school's work.

The number of pupils in each class is high: class sizes in Key Stage 1 are above average and those in Key Stage 2 are much higher than is found nationally. The ratio of pupils to teachers is higher than the national figure. The proportion of pupils who are educated in classes with over 30 pupils is more than double the national rate due to there being 3 large classes in Key Stage 2.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets the statutory requirements. However, although provision is made for personal, social and health education, it is not securely monitored or planned on a whole-school basis. The school has begun to review its curricular provision in line with recent guidelines. The school offers a good range of extracurricular opportunities which support the pupils' development.

The provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is sound. Their progress is well monitored. Most of the pupils make progress which is at least satisfactory; some make good progress. The school uses a range of suitable strategies to support the pupils who have special educational needs. The pupils frequently receive support in lessons from skilled teaching assistants. However, too often the organisation of this support prevents the teachers from keeping an adequate overview of the pupils' progress and from intervening in

a timely way. Positively, the school has recently introduced a programme which is designed to develop the social and emotional skills of identified pupils.

The display, for example of work, is good across the school and makes a relevant contribution to learning as well as to celebrating pupils' successes.

Most classrooms are adequate, but two of the Key Stage 1 classes occupy a joint open space which is not well suited to the development of lively and interesting teaching. Toilet facilities in the upper Key Stage 2 building are inadequate. The school cares well for pupils' health, safety and well-being and pupils feel supported; however, apart from in English, a number of pupils had only a limited understanding of their own academic progress. The school has recently started work on the healthy schools initiative, as a result of which it has consulted widely with both pupils and parents.

The school has good links with parents. It publishes a useful and attractive guide to the curriculum to foster the learning partnership with parents, and meetings are well attended. Parents are encouraged to offer their views through newsletters and questionnaires as well as to share in discussion about issues such as targets.

Leadership and management

The headteacher took up his post in January 2005 following a brief period when an acting headteacher was responsible for the school. His leadership is good and he has an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation is detailed, evidence-based and realistic in its judgements. It is being used to develop a well-judged agenda for the school's further improvement. Financial planning is sound and steps have been taken to improve the previously unsatisfactory funding of the various curriculum subjects. The organisation of classes, which was planned a year ago, is unsatisfactory.

The wider senior leadership team consists of a deputy headteacher, who has been in post for two years, and the co-ordinators of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The leadership provided by the team is good; the senior managers have strong expertise which they have contributed to the strategic plan for the school's continued improvement. The deputy headteacher leads by example through his excellent teaching. The management of the subjects is good in English and mathematics but that of the other subjects is inconsistent and is only satisfactory overall, as the school recognises.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory overall, although attendance at meetings is unsatisfactory. Some of the governors are very committed to the school's improvement, and their ability to monitor its progress and hold its leadership to account is improving, but the minutes of full governing body meetings do not always provide a clear record of these processes. Good links have been made between individual governors and particular areas of work, for example in music and special educational needs.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The Latimer Primary School was inspected by two HMI in January 2002 under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in July and September 2002, in January, June, and November 2003 and in March, June and October 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of January 2002.

In May 2005, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Nineteen lessons and three assemblies were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of senior staff, the chair of governors and a representative from the local education authority, and informally with other staff. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of January 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

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