



Lindens Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104212
LEA Walsall
Inspection number 277102
Inspection dates 14 September 2005 to 15 September 2005
Reporting inspector Doris Bell AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hundred Acre Road Streetly
School category	Foundation		Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B74 2BB
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3539273
Number on roll	348	Fax number	0121 3539273
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tony Beeson
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Simon Griffiths

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 14 September 2005 - 15 September 2005	Inspection number 277102
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

With 328 pupils on roll, 159 boys and 169 girls, Lindens is bigger than most primary schools. The number will increase during the year as it takes more children into the nursery each term, on a part time basis. The socioeconomic background of the majority of pupils is better than average and attainment on entry to the school is above the attainment of children of a similar age. The proportions of pupils receiving free school meals, or who have learning difficulties, are lower than in most schools. This term, the school admitted for the first time, five pupils with physical disabilities and is now a resourced school for ten such pupils. The pupils are assigned to the year groups according to their age. There is a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and an even smaller number who do not have English as their first language. However, all speak English fluently. The school had a new headteacher two years ago. He has operated without a deputy headteacher for much of the time since his appointment, coping with significant disruption to the senior management team and the long term absences of the key members of staff leading literacy and numeracy. Low staff morale, declining standards, unsatisfactory pupil behaviour and a building in a poor state of repair added to these difficulties. The school is involved in several projects with other schools and the local education authority, aimed at raising standards and achievement in literacy and numeracy.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement, assessment and monitoring and evaluation.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage where they make good progress, as do pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities throughout the school. Learning for these pupils is regularly checked and work planned for them meets their learning needs. This rate of progress slackens in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 6, standards in English and science are only average. In mathematics, they are below average and pupils' progress is not good enough. Overall, the school is not as effective as it could be because the quality of teaching is not good enough and pupils are not making enough progress particularly in mathematics. Consequently, the school is not providing good enough value for money in relation to the standards pupils reach.

The school has experienced significant staffing difficulties which the headteacher has had to manage without the support of a deputy. These difficulties have undoubtedly impeded the school's progress since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the headteacher has raised the teachers' confidence in their ability to improve and to lead and manage their subjects. Overall, the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory although the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is not sufficiently robust. The improvements that have taken place in the school ethos, relationships throughout the school, and the staff's determination to work together to achieve improvement, give confidence that the school does have the capacity to improve. However, the systems to bring about improvement have not been in place long enough to demonstrate their effectiveness in reversing the history of underachievement evident in the school's national test results.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve achievement, especially in mathematics
- raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can do by using the information gained from assessments to plan challenging work and help pupils to do better
- establish rigorous systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children start school with levels of attainment that are better than those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and reach above average standards at the end of their Reception year. Standards are still above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2. However, by Year 6, they are broadly average in English and science, but in mathematics, they fall to below average

and pupils do not achieve well enough. The school is aware of this and has begun to tackle the underachievement, following a period when there was no sustained leadership of the subject and teachers' expectations had not been high enough. Pupils do not yet have learning targets but the school is setting these imminently following the results of the optional tests that the pupils were taking during the inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do have targets and they make good progress towards them. This is because their learning is regularly assessed and adapted to suit their different learning needs, and they receive good support in and out of class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school and older pupils talk enthusiastically about how the school has improved in recent times. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils know the importance of eating and drinking healthily and of keeping themselves fit and safe because the school places good emphasis on these aspects of its work. Pupils behave well and demonstrate good attitudes to school and to learning. It is to their credit that this good behaviour continues through lessons or parts of lessons when teachers sometimes talk for too long. They are quiet, polite and respectful and value highly the opportunity they have to contribute to the school's improvement through the school council, and to take on responsibilities, such as being play leaders. They have responded particularly well to the integration of pupils with physical disabilities and readily assist them at work and play. Pupils develop well morally and socially and the good range of activities outside of the normal school day contributes to this development. Assemblies and displays around the school contribute to pupils' understanding in these areas, but there are few opportunities in lessons for pupils to think and reflect for themselves.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage because staff know and assess their children well, tasks are interesting and challenging and, as a result, the children's progress is good. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but in Years 3 to 6 it is inadequate. Although teaching on a lesson-by-lesson basis is satisfactory, its impact on pupils' progress is not effective enough. Plans are detailed but they do not show what different groups in the class will learn. Too often, teachers' expectations of the pupils are too low and tasks are too easy. This was evident in one English session and is particularly evident in mathematics. It happens because teachers do not have sufficient information about what pupils already know and understand, and this is because they do not record individual pupils' progress well enough. However, there are strengths in the way staff promote pupils' good behaviour, and pupils work well together when asked to do so.

With help and direction from the headteacher, teachers are now planning together, sharing expertise and thinking about the different approaches they might use so that activities match the different ways in which children learn. However, not all teachers are adapting their teaching to meet pupils' needs and, as a result, pupils become restless, particularly during the opening and closing parts of lessons. The time left at the end of lessons is not used well for assessing what pupils have learned, and marking does not give them clear guidance as to how to improve. However, pupils praise the good use teachers make of information and communication technology. They think that the new interactive whiteboards are 'great' because 'You think you are playing games, but you are really learning!'. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have good personal support from staff in and out of lessons. They are fully included in all activities and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The use of national strategies and guidelines ensures that learning is built upon each year, although teachers are not yet using these guidelines well enough to plan work that meets the needs of individual pupils. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage meets the needs of the children well. Throughout the school, work for pupils with learning and physical difficulties is planned well, ensuring their good progress. There is a good range of clubs and after school activities available for pupils to join, which help them to learn how to get on well with each other. Educational visits and visitors make the curriculum more interesting and extend and enrich pupils' learning. One group of pupils spoke enthusiastically about when they visited Aston Hall to learn about the Great Fire of London and of how one of the children was dressed up as Samuel Pepys.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The good ethos, the safe and attractive environment and the good relationships throughout the school reflect the good pastoral care, guidance and support given to the pupils. This is especially noticeable in the successful integration of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the attitudes and caring approach of staff towards all pupils. Good attention is given to the pupils' health, safety and well-being and to the promotion of healthy lifestyles. At an academic level, assessment information is not used well enough to set targets and help pupils understand how they might improve their learning, except in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully brought the school to a point where open consultation has established a unity of purpose and created good teamwork amongst staff and

governors. Governors, staff and the majority of parents are united in their praise for the improvements so far. The head has moved the school forward without a deputy, nurturing in the staff an understanding and acceptance of the need to change and improve, and dealing with the long term absences of the literacy and numeracy coordinators on maternity leave. All staff share his vision of a much improved school. The school development plan has highlighted accurately the areas in which much improvement is needed, including standards, and demonstrates the school's ability to evaluate itself is satisfactory. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have begun to visit classes to check on pupils' learning. They have worked closely with the headteacher, managing the finances well and supporting him effectively through a turbulent period. The accommodation and the resources for learning are good and good use is made of external agencies, particularly to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. All of the school's work has due regard for equality of opportunity for all. The headteacher has an accurate picture of the quality of teaching of each member of staff and has used this information appropriately in their deployment. Performance management is in place for teaching staff and targets satisfactorily reflect the school's accurately identified priorities. The strong focus on raising standards shows that the school does have the capacity to improve despite the weaknesses it has had to address. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making us so welcome in your school and talking to us about yourselves and your work. We enjoyed visiting your school and finding out about how you learn.

We liked these things most of all:

- you behave well in lessons and around the school
- you are polite and courteous, even when on occasions you have to sit for too long listening to your teacher, or your work is too easy
- you enjoy coming to school; you take good care of it and you have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe
- you work well together when you are asked to, and you willingly help others in class and around the school.

These are the things we have asked your school to work on now:

- helping you to do better in your work because you are capable of much more than you are being asked to do at the moment
- using the information from the tests you take and from the work you do throughout the year to help you learn more and to let you know how you could do better
- checking on how well your teachers teach and making sure that you are always taught well.

We hope you will all achieve much more as a result of the school making these improvements and that you will enjoy learning throughout your lives.