



Light Oaks Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105894
LEA Salford
Inspection number 277437
Inspection dates 10 May 2006 to 11 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Arthur Markham CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lancaster Road
School category	Community		Salford
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Lancashire M6 8LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 788 8099
Number on roll	285	Fax number	0161 788 8099
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs C Allcock
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs A Taylor

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 7	10 May 2006 - 11 May 2006	277437

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large infant and nursery school serves an area of mixed housing and average levels of social deprivation. The number of children who receive free school meals is below average. Most children are from white British backgrounds with a small number from minority ethnic groups. There are few children at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. On entry to the Nursery, almost half of the children have levels of attainment below those expected. The percentage identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has been awarded the Artsmark Gold Award and has Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school's view that it is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher and her strong vision of the way in which young children should learn are clearly communicated to staff and have generated a strong team approach. Teaching is good and the curriculum presents a wide range of exciting learning opportunities to the children who consequently enjoy their learning greatly and make good progress. The care, guidance and support provided for children are outstanding as is their personal development, which is reflected in their very positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour. Children's enthusiasm for learning is impressive. Parents have a high regard for the school, one commenting that, 'Light Oaks is an extremely good school, all the staff who have taught my children have been excellent'.

Children make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage and by the time they start Year 1, most achieve the standards expected and a good number exceed them. The strong emphasis placed on practical activities develops children's independence well. Children continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, achieving standards in reading, writing and mathematics that have been generally above those expected for their age during the last five years. The school has recognised that writing is a relatively weaker area and is taking action to remedy this. Children's progress is tracked carefully and target setting procedures in English are good, but are not yet fully developed in other subjects.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and, bearing in mind the strong leadership of the headteacher and the very obvious commitment to continual development, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the action in the school development plan to raise standards in writing focusing on children's skills in spoken English.
- Extend the effective pupil target setting procedures used in English to other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. On entry to the Nursery, the children's range of abilities is wide, but overall their attainment is below average. Imaginative teaching and a stimulating curriculum generate very positive attitudes to learning in children. Progress is particularly good in the Foundation Stage and most children achieve the standards expected nationally and a good percentage exceed them. Children continue to achieve well through Years 1 and 2. During the last five years, children's performance in national tests at the end of Year 2 has always

been at least average and in three of those years was above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. In 2005, the slight dip in performance was the result of the lower scores attained by the high number of boys with summer births, but in general there is no marked difference in the performance of boys and girls. The school has recognised that children's writing is a relatively weaker area and is taking determined action to remedy this by improving children's speaking and listening skills. Equality of opportunity is given good attention and effective support is given to those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few learning English as an additional language so that they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of children, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Attendance is good. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They really enjoy school and are often bubbling with enthusiasm as they work. Their independent learning skills are very good and they collaborate well with each other in lessons. They develop responsible attitudes and have a strong sense of being part of a community. Older children help to care for younger ones at lunchtime and playtimes. They know that the adults in school take their views seriously because the School Council has enabled them to influence changes.

Assemblies and lessons encourage reflection and awareness of many faiths and cultures. A programme of additional activities, visits and visitors to school enriches this. Children understand the need for being active and eating healthily. They participate in a good programme of physical education and a range of sporting activities during and outside the school day. Lunches provide a well balanced diet and water bottles and fruit are available. The children's very positive attitudes, self-confidence and well developed skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them well for future learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there is some outstanding teaching. Classes are happy and productive because relationships are good and teachers know their children well. Lessons are planned well with activities carefully matched to children's needs. Teaching is lively and motivates children, enabling them to make good progress in building basic skills. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. An effective team approach provides a well organised, lively and stimulating setting. The emphasis given to developing children's independence through the use of practical activities results in them rapidly growing in confidence and developing very good work habits. Teamwork, across and within the year groups, is also a strong feature of Key Stage 1. Teachers' clear explanations and skilful questioning develop an enthusiasm for learning in children and they consequently make good progress.

Assessment procedures are good and used well to plan the next steps of learning. Children's work is marked well and the setting of targets in English is proving effective in raising their awareness of what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to children's learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the most able children are challenged effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good and meets successfully the needs of all the children. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good and gives a strong emphasis on enabling children to make choices, which develops their independence very effectively. Throughout the school, the emphasis on creativity, and the thoughtful linking of subjects to teach a range of important skills, results in lively, interesting and enjoyable lessons. Careful account is taken of children's interests and their individual learning styles. Effective use of the outdoor environment to provide a range of active learning opportunities enhances provision well. Innovative practices have resulted from the school's partnership work with other schools and local providers. The inclusion of philosophy lessons has successfully encouraged children to be reflective and to articulate their opinions. As a result, they gain confidence and are prepared to take on challenging tasks. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well and a wide range of lunchtime clubs extend learning further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and a strength of the school. Parents appreciate the welcoming and safe environment provided for their children. One parent stating, 'It's nice to know that your children are well looked after in a caring and fun environment.' Procedures for child protection are in place and arrangements for health and safety are rigorous. Children say that it is easy to talk to staff if they have any problems and that they are very well looked after. The school helps children settle very well and does all it can to make sure children are prepared for their move to the junior school. The highly committed staff know the children very well. They gather information sensitively and use it effectively to provide support and guidance for children's personal as well as academic development. Children's progress is carefully monitored and target setting procedures in English are good, but have yet to be fully developed in other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She is passionate about children's learning and inspires commitment and enthusiasm from all members of staff. The creation of leadership teams based on the

areas of learning has developed successfully a strong team approach. New ideas are taken on board enthusiastically to make the curriculum innovative and stimulating. This, together with the use of a range of outside expertise, has had a very positive impact on the quality of provision for the children.

Management systems are well organised and effective. Self-evaluation procedures are good and the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. The views of parents and children are taken into account and the school development plan consequently is a very effective tool for improvement. The need to improve standards in writing has rightly been identified and a well thought out action plan drawn up to address this. Finances are managed efficiently and there is a clear rationale for the use of the large surplus of funds carried over.

Governors are highly committed and involved actively in the work of the school. They have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and provide effective support and challenge to the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and, taking into account the strong leadership of the headteacher, the teamwork evident in the school and the effective support provided by governors, the capacity for further improvement is good.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

As you know, three inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspectors. We enjoyed being in your school and listening to what you had to say. The things that we particularly liked were:

- the way Mrs Taylor and the staff are always introducing new ideas to make lessons exciting and learning fun so that you enjoy school
- the way the staff take outstanding care of you
- your excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school and the way you help each other
- your enthusiasm and hard work in lessons and the way you take pride in your work
- the polite way you told us your views about school.

We have asked your teachers to improve two things to make your school even better. We want them to:

- help you improve your writing by developing your speaking skills
- make sure that you know what you need to do to improve your work in all subjects.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We all hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Light Oaks Infant School becomes an even better school.