



Locking Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109103
LEA North Somerset
Inspection number 278123
Inspection dates 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Alison Grainger AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Meadow Drive
School category	Community		Locking
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Weston-super-Mare BS24 8BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01934 822867
Number on roll	273	Fax number	01934 822867
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Bill Bearsby
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr John Jollisse

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 4 July 2006 - 5 July 2006	Inspection number 278123
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© 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

The school draws its pupils from the village of Locking and the surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few have English as an additional language, although none is at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is close to the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception Year is broadly at the level expected for their age.

The school has been through an unsettled period in the last two years. Since a local authority review found that it was not performing well enough, the school has had several acting headteachers. One of these acting headteachers has been appointed as permanent headteacher with effect from September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school providing satisfactory value for money. The school's view and the inspectors' view of its effectiveness are the same. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory but it has not been smooth. Almost all developments have taken place since the local authority review in 2004.

Parents are pleased with the school. They appreciate the way in which staff have looked after their children during the recent unsettled time. Almost all pupils enjoy being at school. Their personal development is satisfactory, with some good features such as their behaviour as well as their understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move up through the school. This is because the quality of provision is satisfactory, including in the Reception Year. However, progress is not as steady as it should be for all pupils. The main reason why progress is not better is that teaching is not closely enough matched to pupils' differing needs. Another factor is that pupils are not given clear enough guidance about what they are already doing well and what they need to do next to make more progress.

Leadership and management have improved and are satisfactory. Staff and governors are committed to improving the school further and are poised to do so. They have a clear understanding of the 'big picture' in terms of the school's effectiveness and its current state of development, which means that self-evaluation is satisfactory overall. However, a weakness in leadership and management needs to be rectified if the pace of improvement is not only to be sustained but also increased. Presently, the checking of how well teaching and the curriculum contribute to pupils' learning is inadequate. This means that weaknesses in these areas are not identified and eradicated as quickly as they should be. Nevertheless, the school now has the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' rate of progress by ensuring that teaching is closely matched to their differing needs.
- Provide pupils with clear guidance about what they are doing well and what they need to do next to make more progress.
- Ensure that the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' learning is rigorously checked so that weaknesses are identified and rectified.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move up through the school. Standards have improved recently following a period in which they were not high enough. Children in the Reception class are on course to reach the standards expected at the end of the school year.

Pupils' results in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 were a little below average in reading and mathematics and significantly below average in writing in 2005. This year's assessments are better and show standards as close to the 2005 national average. Pupils are making better progress in Year 2 than in Year 1.

In 2005, the end-of-Year 6 results were better than in previous years and rose to above average in mathematics and English, although they remained below average in science. The test results this year show standards as close to the 2005 national average in all three subjects. Although pupils' progress towards the targets set is acceptable, it is not as steady and consistent as it should be for all pupils. In some classes, there are several pupils who are not moving on as well as they are capable of doing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Almost all pupils enjoy being at school, like being with their friends, and say that the adults are kind. Although the attendance rate is a little below the national average, most pupils attend regularly. Attitudes to learning and enjoyment of lessons are satisfactory. Not all pupils take enough pride in the appearance of their work and some present it poorly.

Behaviour is good. Pupils move very sensibly about the site and know the importance of safety, such as in practical lessons. Pupils are proud of the school's 'healthy school' status and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise.

Pupils' contribution to the community is satisfactory. They are pleased with the new school council and see it as starting to make a real difference. Older pupils respond well to opportunities for responsibility. Some contribution is made to the wider community through, for example, raising funds for charities and the school summer fayre, which is an important village event.

Moral and social development is a strength in pupils' personal development. Pupils' understanding of a modern multi-ethnic society is a less well developed area. Skills to support pupils in their future lives are developed satisfactorily, such as in working together.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The satisfactory quality of teaching ensures that pupils' progress is adequate. There are occasional examples of good teaching. In an English lesson in Year 2, for instance, teaching was closely focused on what the pupils should learn, both in whole-class discussion and in the writing activities that the pupils worked on individually.

Lessons are conducted in a calm and orderly atmosphere. Good relationships between adults and pupils help to create a climate supportive of learning. In most lessons, teachers clearly explain the purpose of activities so that pupils know what they are aiming to achieve.

The main reason why teaching does not help pupils to make better than satisfactory progress is that much of it is not well enough matched to the full range of pupils' needs in the mixed-age and mixed-ability classes. There is too much teaching aimed at 'the middle' of the class. Pupils with learning difficulties are helped to do the same work as others because teaching assistants support them satisfactorily but sometimes these pupils need even more help. There are times when the more capable and 'average' pupils are not well enough challenged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The range of learning opportunities meets pupils' needs and external requirements satisfactorily. In the Reception Year, there is an appropriate balance between adult led activities and those that children select for themselves from a range provided.

A good amount of time is given to English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6, reflecting recent attention to raising standards in these subjects. Although activities help pupils to develop their factual knowledge in science, there is insufficient focus on learning through practical investigations. Staff have just undertaken training in order to rectify this shortcoming. Skills in using computers are satisfactorily developed through specific lessons but pupils do not routinely use computers to support their learning across the subjects.

A reasonable range of activities, such as clubs and visits, enriches day-by-day lessons. Pupils enjoyed a recent day focused on learning about Brunel.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' progress and personal development. Pastoral care is good. Adults are accessible to pupils and pupils are confident that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety are satisfactory, as are the links with outside agencies to meet individual needs. Good action is being taken to improve the attendance of the few pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should.

A weakness is the quality of guidance to pupils about how to make better progress with their school work. Not enough is done to give pupils individual targets towards which they can work and against which they are involved in reviewing their progress. Marking does not tell pupils what they have done well or what they need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management have improved recently and are now satisfactory. The acting headteachers have successfully worked with staff to develop an understanding of their shared accountability for the school's effectiveness. Those with leadership and management roles are now keen to lead their areas and have started to do so. They are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and recognise that, although some big steps forward have been taken, there is still a lot more to do.

Governors readily acknowledge that until recently they did not know enough about what their roles required. They now have a satisfactory awareness of effective governance and understand the school's present stage of development. Like the staff with leadership roles, they are poised to move the school forward.

There is adequate consultation with parents. Pupils' views are sought satisfactorily and this is increasing through the recently formed school council. The pupils too know that they can help the school to improve.

The school's self-evaluation is largely objective and accurate and is satisfactory overall. Nevertheless, a weakness remains in the checking of teaching and the curriculum. As a result, weaknesses in these areas that prevent pupils from doing better are not well enough identified and rectified, for example, in the match of teaching to pupils' needs and in the quality of marking.

The school stood still for some time after it was last inspected. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory only because of the action taken more recently. These improvements and the commitment of staff and governors to further change indicate that there is sufficient capacity to make the necessary developments now.

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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	3	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?	3	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	4	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 for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you. We saw that you enjoy being at school, behave well and play sensibly together at lunchtimes. We found you to be friendly and polite. You have a good understanding of the importance of having a balanced diet and taking regular exercise.

Your parents tell us that the adults in school look after you well. You have told us that they always have time for you. We met with some of the members of your new school council. They told us that it is really starting to make a difference to the school and it is good that you are being involved in this way.

We found that you are making satisfactory progress with your school work. We think that some of you could be doing better and we have asked the school to do some things to help you. We have asked the teachers to make sure that the work is at just the right level for each of you in all the classes. We know that some of you could do harder work and that some of you need more help.

We think it would be helpful for you to be told more about what you are already doing well and about what you need to do next to make more progress. The teachers are going to look at how they can do this when they mark your work. They are also going to give you individual targets.

To help the school get better, the teachers and governors are going to do more checking up on how well the school is meeting your needs. I have met your new headteacher and she is really looking forward to working with everyone, including all of you, to make Locking Primary School one that keeps getting better.

Thank you again for your help.