



Great Linford Combined School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110366
LEA Milton Keynes LEA
Inspection number 278414
Inspection dates 29 September 2005 to 30 September 2005
Reporting inspector Vanessa Ward AI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary	School address	St Leger Drive
School category	Community		Great Linford
Age range of pupils	4 to 12		Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK14 5BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908605027
Number on roll	339	Fax number	00
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Gilly Walden
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs C E Dunstan

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Pupils come from a mix of social backgrounds. About half come from areas outside the school's immediate neighbourhood. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, but is increasing. This includes those whose first language is believed not to be English. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is low. There are more pupils than is average with learning disabilities. The number of pupils who join the school at various times of the year is above average and is increasing. The school achieved Investors in People status in 2003. It is now working towards a Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and is improving. The school's self evaluation is thorough and is helping it to become even more effective. The judgements of its own performance are, for the most part, accurate but it is modest about leadership, management and the curriculum, which inspectors found to be good. The school gives satisfactory value for money. There are many strong features in the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher and deputy, supported by the senior staff and governors, lead the school with a determination to raise the achievement of each pupil. Standards rose significantly in the 2005 national tests. The process for setting and monitoring individual targets for pupils is adding greater rigour to pupils' learning and is contributing to raising standards. Pupils enjoy school and behave well. The school provides good care and support for the pupils and this is effective in promoting both their personal and academic development. The school is already working successfully to improve the quality of teaching and to spread the existing good and outstanding practice found in some classes. This is helping to increase the pupils' achievement and raise standards. The school is aware of and committed to raising standards further, with a particular focus on English and mathematics. The leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are outstanding and contribute to the very good progress made by the children. This enables a large majority of them to attain the expected goals at the end of the reception year. The school has developed good links with the wider community and with parents, who hold the school in high regard. The issues raised in the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. The recent improvements made, combined with the commitment of all to bring about further school improvement, show that the school is well placed to continue its progress.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise standards further throughout the school in English and mathematics.* Continue to improve the quality of teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils' achievement is satisfactory and has several good aspects. When they join the school, the children's standards are often below those expected of four-year-olds in literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The high quality of provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that progress is very good and consistent for all. By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, their standards are average. The national test results for Year 2 and Year 6 in 2005, were much better than those attained in the two previous years, and reversed a downward trend. This is because the school successfully put in place action to remedy the weaknesses it identified in pupils' learning. As a consequence, results in writing, for example, were much improved. The additional provision for children with learning difficulties, those learning English as an additional language and those who join the school mid-year enables them to

make good progress. The school is aware that standards can improve further and is focusing particularly on English and mathematics. The senior staff insist that the teachers set challenging targets for each pupil, monitoring their progress towards them and improving the support they provide. This has contributed to the recent improvement in standards and the satisfactory achievement of different groups of pupils, including those pupils capable of higher attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like coming to school and enjoy their lessons. Attendance is average and has improved since the previous inspection. The pupils' personal development is good and they learn to treat each other with care and respect. One pupil commented, 'I like working in groups because we can help each other'. The school promotes moral and social values consistently well. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and are aware of the impact of their actions on others. As a result, they generally behave well and work and play constructively. The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is also good. Teachers listen to and value pupils' views and this makes a good contribution to their self-worth. Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are planned into the curriculum, through subjects such as art, music and English. Pupils understand the benefits of eating healthily and taking exercise. They learn how to play safely and to make sensible choices. Their views on the health and safety of the school environment are sought and valued. They learn the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, providing a good foundation for later life. All pupils, through the school council, make a good contribution to the quality of life in the school, with older pupils being aware of their responsibilities towards the younger members of the school community. Many pupils are involved in activities within the local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and is improving. There is no inadequate teaching. Occasional good and outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection, especially in the Foundation Stage, but this is not yet established across the whole school. Regular monitoring by the senior management team ensures that teachers have good advice on how to improve their performance. Teachers prepare lessons well and most are skilled at involving the different groups of pupils, including the higher attainers, through careful questioning, partner discussions and group activities. In a lesson where the pupils' calculation skills were challenged effectively, they remained involved throughout and achieved well. The great majority of pupils enjoy their work. The teachers manage behaviour successfully and this ensures that pupils respond positively to the expectations of their teachers. However, there continue to be some lessons that lack pace and challenge, slowing the pupils' learning and diminishing their

interest. The use of assessment to track pupils' progress and identify targets for improvement is becoming better established. The current arrangements enable teachers to know their pupils well. Marking is effective in helping pupils to understand how to improve. The training of teaching assistants has enabled them to make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. This helps pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language to make consistently good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the reception classes is outstanding, ensuring that children get off to a flying start. In other classes, the curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements. Planning in all subjects is secure, and is enabling links between subjects to be developed more thoroughly. The needs of different groups of pupils are met well, particularly for pupils with learning disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Pupils' awareness and understanding of a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe are promoted effectively through science, physical education and personal, social and health education. There is a good range of clubs, activities and visitors to school which adds to pupils' achievement and their enjoyment of learning. The showing of baby chicks to children in Year 1, stimulated a lot of interest and excitement, combined with effective learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is a strength of the school. The procedures governing the safety and protection of pupils are good and parents are confident that their children will be well cared for. One parent reflected the views expressed by many in the pre-inspection questionnaires, when she wrote, 'I have found that the teachers know how to make each child feel special, which makes the school a very caring, happy environment to learn in'. Inspections of the premises and risk assessments are carried out regularly and the school manages identified risks well. Pupils trust their teachers to help them if they are unhappy or worried about their work. They say that their targets, and the comments the teachers write when they mark their books, often help them to improve their work. The school keeps good records to monitor pupils' progress and provides teachers with information to enable them to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. This assists teachers in providing appropriate support and challenge for pupils of different abilities, including the higher attainers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior management team assess the quality of their work as satisfactory. However, the inspectors judge it to be good. This is because the leadership team has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Evidence

shows that it is working successfully to bring about school improvement. For example, as a result of the evaluation of weaknesses in pupils' progress, the school has recently successfully focused on improving standards in English, mathematics and science. All staff, governors and, where appropriate, parents and children, are involved in evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses. This helps the school leaders to gain a clear picture of priorities and of action to be taken, and contributes to effective school improvement planning. Regular evaluation of teaching identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers are supported in improving their teaching through a range of strategies, as part of their professional development. The effect of these actions is improving teaching and learning, raising standards and improving the overall effectiveness of the school. The roles of the subject leaders have been developed significantly since the previous inspection. They now have much greater influence over improvements in their subjects and this process is being successfully extended. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Governors carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. They are supportive of, and involved in, all aspects of school development. Every child is valued and the school is successful in making sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to develop within a safe and stimulating environment. Parents appreciate this attention to individual needs and express confidence in the school's capacity to care for their children. The school uses external agencies effectively to improve pupils' achievement and personal development. It manages resources well, and makes sure that they contribute to school improvement.

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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?	3	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	1	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?	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	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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, we visited your school recently for two days, and looked at all the things you do there. We talked to some of you, and we would like to thank you all for being so friendly and willing to talk to us. It was really useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy doing.

The things we think are good about your school are: * The way the youngest children are taught is really exciting and helps them to learn very well. * Your headteacher and teachers are good at finding ways to make your school better so that you can learn more. * All of the grown ups in school look after you and make sure that you are safe and happy. You told us that you trust your teachers to look after you if you are upset or worried. * Your teachers know how well each one of you should be doing and check to see if you need extra help with your work.

We think that your school could be even better if: * Your test results in English and mathematics, which were better last year, could improve further. * Your teachers continue helping each other to make the teaching even better than it is already. Your teachers know how to make these improvements. We hope that you will help them as much as you can, so that together you can improve your learning even more.