



Little Bowden Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119936
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 280690
Inspection dates 6 February 2006 to 7 February 2006
Reporting inspector John Eadie AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Scotland Road
School category	Community		Market Harborough
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Leicestershire LE16 8AY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01858 462528
Number on roll	330	Fax number	01858 464196
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Margaret Jarvis
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Nick McDonald

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average-sized school is situated in an area of mainly older private housing on the edge of the town of Market Harborough. Almost all children are White British with small numbers from a range of other heritages. All speak English as their first language. The number of children eligible for free school meals is increasing, but is still below average. When they start in the Reception class, children's levels of skills are generally average. The proportion of children in the school with learning difficulties has been declining in recent years, but is still broadly average. The school has reached the standards to qualify for the Investors in People Award and has also won a Football Association award in recognition of its efforts in school football. There have been a number of staff changes in the last couple of years, including the headteacher, who joined the school in September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing a sound education for its children with a number of good features, and is giving satisfactory value for money. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness matched that of inspectors. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has carried out a clear analysis of what needs to improve and work has started on all the areas identified in this report. With the recent changes in staff, there are a number of new management systems. There are some good initiatives but, as yet, these are not having an impact in raising standards. Governors are very supportive but their monitoring role is underdeveloped.

The provision for children in the Reception class is good and they make good progress to reach above average standards by the start of Year 1. Through the rest of the school, children make sound progress and teaching is satisfactory. A particular area for development of teaching is that more able children are not given challenging work often enough. An example of the good progress made since the last inspection is that the provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities has improved considerably.

The school provides a varied curriculum which is enhanced outstandingly well by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Children's personal development is good. This is due to the good levels of care and support. However, systems of assessment are relatively new and are not yet helping children to understand how they can improve.

Bearing in mind the good progress made since the last inspection and the commitment to continued improvement, the school is well placed to move forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all children, particularly the more able, are always given work that challenges them.
- Improve the quality of assessment, and particularly marking, so that children know how to improve their work.
- Continue to develop the role of the governors so that they monitor standards and school developments effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Reception class to reach above average standards in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Through the rest of the school, children make sound progress. The school identified some underachievement of boys in the 2005 national tests in Year 2, but inspection evidence showed that this is no longer the case. Improvements have been made in the national tests in Year 6 and standards in 2005 were above average. However, in the 2005 tests, targets for the higher Level 5 were missed in both English and mathematics. This reflects the findings of the inspection and the school's own analysis that some

more able children are not always achieving as well as they can. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are making good progress, as the provision for them has improved greatly in recent years and they have very clear targets set for their progress. Good progress has been made in addressing the issue at the last inspection regarding standards in information and communication technology (ICT). Good provision is now made and children are reaching average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good, with an outstanding feature being their enjoyment of school. This has a positive impact on their good attendance, attitudes and behaviour. The emphasis is on reward for good work and behaviour, and sanctions are seldom needed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in moral and social development. The school council are keen to 'make the school a better place' by, for example, developing a flower bed and quiet area in the playground, with financial support from the Parents and Teachers Association. Children have a good understanding of safe practices and healthy lifestyles. They value the initiatives towards providing healthy lunches in school, and the idea of eating only healthy snacks at break-time. The healthy cooking club, where children prepare, cook and eat healthy food, is very popular. They have a good understanding of the needs of others, and are particularly generous with their fundraising, the latest being for a local cancer charity. Children's work in English, mathematics and ICT and, most significantly, their growing independence are contributing to the development of workplace skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. There are some examples of good teaching throughout the school, but also some shortcomings causing weaknesses in achievement, particularly for more able children. Planning often shows that the needs of all children are being taken into account. However, in practice, lessons sometimes lack challenge for the more able children, which slows their progress. Children with learning difficulties are supported well, with work at the right level for them, and good help and guidance. Teaching assistants often give very effective support, but there are times when they are under used at the beginning of lessons. There are examples of assessment being used to help planning, but this is at an early stage of development. Marking does not often indicate to children how they can improve. Resources, particularly interactive whiteboards, are used effectively to motivate children, who show obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm. This also impacts positively on children's attitudes and behaviour, which are always good and sometimes exemplary. Teachers value children's ideas, building confidence and self-esteem.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It gives children a wide range of knowledge and understanding, whilst ensuring an emphasis on developing skills in English and mathematics. Challenge days in a range of subjects add further fun and interest. The work to develop links between different subjects is beginning to help children use their skills more broadly, such as using the computer to design a sorting activity in a history lesson. These links are not yet fully developed.

The school's excellent extra-curricular programme covers an outstanding range of very popular activities, including a wide range of sports, music, dance, art and technology. This is further extended by numerous trips and visits, which results in an exciting and enjoyable curriculum. Parents are, 'impressed with the range of clubs' and 'fantastic amount of sporting activities'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children are cared for, guided and supported well. All adults are fully aware of Child Protection procedures, and children feel safe, secure and valued. They are confident in approaching adults for help and advice. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for all outside visits. Children with learning or behavioural difficulties are supported well, by their teachers, the teaching assistants and outside agencies. Teaching assistants maintain good ongoing records of the work of these children, but this is not done so systematically for other children. These assessment systems are developing, but as yet, children are not all given enough guidance on what they need to do to improve. Parents are pleased with the treatment of their children, one commenting that children are treated 'with great care and consideration'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, supported well by the senior management team, has conducted a very clear and accurate analysis of the areas for development for the school. Plans have been put in place to address many of these and they are beginning to have an impact. For example, some children have a clear idea of how they can improve their work. Some management systems such as the leadership of subjects are being restructured, and these are not yet being effective. However, there is a very clear drive to raise standards, shared by the whole staff team. There is a good range of monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and any issues arising are dealt with well.

Governors are involved well with the school. They provide a good range of expertise and enthusiasm and are very supportive of the school, many visiting frequently. However, their role of monitoring standards and the success of school developments is not sufficiently well developed. Parents are very supportive of the school and are

consulted regularly. Many commented that the headteacher and staff are approachable and that issues raised are dealt with well. Good links with other local schools benefit pupils' learning.

Bearing in mind the vision for improvement shared by all staff, the involvement of governors and parents, and the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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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	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	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	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?	3	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	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 so much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and hearing how proud you are of your school. We were particularly impressed with how friendly and polite you were.

Your school does a number of things well, for example:

You work hard as you thoroughly enjoy your learning.

The teachers make their lessons interesting, for example, by using interactive whiteboards and organising trips and visitors.

You behave well and get on really well with each other.

There is a terrific range of sporting and other clubs for you to enjoy and some marvellous opportunities to play music.

All adults in the school look after you very well.

Your headteacher and the staff have a very clear plan to improve the school.

There are things we think the school could do better. They are already working at these.

Some of you find your work too easy and could do harder things.

You are not always told how you can improve your work – do not forget to ask if you are not sure.

Governors take a keen interest in Little Bowden and now need to work more closely with the school to help make it even better.