



Lypiatt Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126185
LEA Wiltshire
Inspection number 282068
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 2 November 2005
Reporting inspector Graham Sims RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Services Cotswold Centre
School category	Community		Lypiatt Road
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9TU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01225 810537
Number on roll	29	Fax number	01225 811542
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Rachel McDonald
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Dilys Jones

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 2 November 2005	Inspection number 282068
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Lypiatt Primary School is unique. It is a very small school, situated within the Services Cotswold Centre in Corsham, and is the only remaining primary school in the country serving families of the armed forces needing temporary accommodation following the break up of a marriage, discharge from the services or other welfare reasons. The majority of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Pupils transfer from a large number of schools in the United Kingdom, Germany, Cyprus and other countries, and older pupils will have attended a number of schools before coming to Lypiatt. Children stay at the school for an average of 16 to 20 weeks until their families are rehoused elsewhere, so there is a constant turnover of pupils joining and leaving the two mixed-age classes. The number of pupils on roll at any one time varies between 20 and 30. Attainment on entry to the school varies widely, but is generally well below average. Because of their immediate circumstances, many of the pupils have significant emotional needs, and three quarters have learning difficulties or disabilities. At the time of the inspection, the school had three pupils with statements of special educational need. The school also receives a small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, an Early Excellence Centre, catering for children from the age of 6 months to 4 years, has opened on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lypiatt Primary School is a good school. It provides a sound academic education, but is outstandingly successful in the way that it deals with the complex circumstances of many of its pupils. The inspection judgement is in line with the school's own view. Given the above average cost of educating each pupil, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Although standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are low, most pupils make significant progress in the short time they are at the school. Many pupils, for example, discover a new motivation to learn. The quality of education for children in the Reception Year is good, although standards achieved by most children are below those expected. Nearly all pupils make very good progress in their personal development, many of them overcoming significant emotional or behavioural problems, and develop good standards of behaviour and positive attitudes to school. The outstanding level of care, support and guidance provided by teachers and assistants is the key contributory factor to pupils' academic and personal progress. A good, relevant and interesting curriculum motivates the pupils, although the range of additional activities, visits and visitors is less than in many schools. The teaching is at least sound, and often good, although teachers could occasionally provide greater challenge for the pupils.

The headteacher leads and manages the school well and has welded the staff into a united, cooperative, compassionate team who work together very well. However, there is room for further development of the leadership responsibilities of key staff. The school is responsive to change, welcomes new initiatives and has a good understanding of its own strengths and areas for development. The school has improved since the last inspection and has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers are sufficiently challenging in the questions they ask, and in the feedback they give to pupils about their work.
- Provide a greater variety of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' educational experiences.
- Develop further the leadership roles and responsibilities of key staff.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards attained by most pupils, from Foundation Stage through to Year 6, are well below those expected for their age and reflect the disrupted education and difficult personal circumstances experienced by many. In the short time that they attend the school, however, all pupils make good progress in relation to their varied starting points. Children in the Reception class make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Older children discover a new desire to learn. Those interviewed during the inspection gave very clear accounts of what they had learnt in

the previous two months, and explained how much they had improved their skills in literacy and numeracy.

Because of the constant changeover of pupils, the school is unable to set meaningful targets for the whole school. However, appropriately challenging targets are set for each pupil after careful assessment of their skills when they enter the school. Good support from teachers and teaching assistants and personalised learning programmes help pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities, to make significant progress in learning essential skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school effects remarkable transformations in pupils' personal development, often within a short time of pupils joining the school. Staff keep careful records of pupils' emotional and behavioural development as well as their motivation to learn. These show that pupils make great strides in developing resilience, relationships, resourcefulness and reflectiveness – the school's 4 Rs – and in learning to cope with very difficult circumstances. Many pupils enter the school with significant behavioural and emotional problems, and these do resurface from time to time. However, the prevailing ethos is fashioned by pupils who develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, who behave well and are learning to relate well to others. That pupils enjoy and value their school is very clear. One pupil, on the verge of leaving, said quite spontaneously, 'This is the best school I have ever been to'. Another, due to leave in a few weeks' time, said he would like to take the school with him. The level of attendance is well below the national average, but absence is normally for understandable and unavoidable reasons to do with the transitory status of all who attend the school. The school places significant emphasis on helping the pupils to adopt safe practices and lead healthy lifestyles. Through adapting to the high standards and expectations set by the school, pupils are learning well how they can make a positive contribution to their ever-changing community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory, and there is a significant amount of good teaching. The school copes well with the constraints of its accommodation and the mixed-age classes to provide good learning experiences for children in their Reception Year. In both classes, teachers have a good awareness of the widely differing needs of the pupils. The favourable ratio of adults to pupils enables the school to provide adult supervision for small groups of pupils, which helps them to learn effectively and develops their confidence and self-esteem. The teachers manage their classes well and develop excellent relationships with the pupils. Occasionally, however, teachers are not challenging enough in the questions they ask

or in the way they mark pupils' work. Although they set individual targets for pupils, they do not always emphasise these enough for pupils to be fully aware of what they need to do to improve their work. The school's assessment of what pupils can do when they join the school is very thorough and provides teachers with a clear picture of the starting point for each pupil. Well presented and thorough records accompany each pupil when they leave the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a curriculum that is adapted very well to suit the particular needs of the school. Whilst the programmes for English and mathematics follow national guidelines closely, an imaginative and well planned cross-curricular approach to other subjects provides stimulating learning opportunities for all pupils. Half-termly topics are divided into self-contained weekly units, which ensure that pupils joining the school are not placed at a disadvantage and pupils do not miss the culmination of a major unit of work when they leave. Particularly good attention is given to dealing with the learning difficulties experienced by the majority of the pupils. The range of extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors to the school is not as extensive as in many schools, and pupils have only limited opportunity to experience life outside the confines of the military base on which they live and go to school. Very good attention is given to helping pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle and adopt safe practices, and the development of pupils' personal, social and citizenship education permeates all aspects of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The standard of support, care and guidance provided by the school is outstanding. There are very good procedures for getting to know pupils and their families when they join the school. Every pupil, however short their stay at the school, is treated as an individual and is well known to all staff. The school works closely with health and other services to meet pupils' physical, mental and other needs. Within the school, a family liaison officer and part-time counsellor provide essential support to class teachers and teaching assistants to ensure pupils' wider needs are met. Child protection procedures are secure. What cannot be captured on paper is the deep and genuine care and concern staff have for their charges and which provide these pupils with such a secure, welcoming and friendly haven. The stability the school provides is not only greatly appreciated by parents and pupils, but is a hugely important factor in preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads and manages the school well. She is very well respected by staff, governors and parents, and her total commitment to meeting the needs of the

school's diverse and constantly changing population is abundantly evident. She is not afraid to try out new ideas, explore new approaches and discard methodology that may work in other schools, but is not appropriate in this setting. She has created a strong team of highly committed, cooperative and hard-working staff. Her influence on creating and maintaining the high standard of care, which enables the school to provide a unique but effective solution to short-term schooling for displaced children, has been profound. Governors are knowledgeable, supportive and involved, and undertake their statutory responsibilities well. They demonstrate an equal commitment to meeting the needs of this enclosed services community through their involvement in developing the Early Excellence Centre, which caters for young children before they reach compulsory school age.

The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate and identifies appropriate areas for future development. Through her regular observation of teaching, the headteacher provides good support in developing the capabilities of other staff. Governors have good procedures for keeping a check on the quality of education provided. There are good opportunities for staff and governors to contribute their ideas for the future development of the school, but there is not enough opportunity for key staff to exercise a clearly defined leadership role. Nevertheless, with the staff's commitment, the governors' support and the headteacher's determination, the school is in a good position to improve further.

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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	4	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?	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	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?	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	1	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	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

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you and your teachers.

I think you attend a good school. I know that none of you has been at the school for very long, and that many of you have been through difficult times before joining the school. It was very good to see that your school is such a welcoming place and that the staff work very hard to help you overcome difficulties and problems. You all behave well, enjoy your work and participate enthusiastically in lessons. The school looks very attractive with displays of your work and plenty of interesting things to look at. I like the way the teachers plan your work well, allowing you to work on a different topic each week, whilst also helping you to develop better skills in English and mathematics.

Although some of you struggle with some of your work, you are all making good progress, and I found no major areas for improvement. I have suggested three things your teachers could do to make the school even better than it is. I have asked the teachers to give you more challenging questions to help you develop your thinking skills and to point out more clearly how you can improve your work. I believe that you should have more opportunities to participate in activities after school and to have more visits out of school. I have also suggested that some of your teachers should have more responsibility for deciding how various aspects of the school are organised.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Lypiatt School and that you will all feel the school has prepared you well for when you move on to your next school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Graham Sims (Lead Inspector)