

Loxdale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104315
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	286906
Inspection date	13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Wright
Headteacher	Susan Maule
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	Chapel Street Bilston WV14 0PH
Telephone number	01902 558570
Fax number	01902558571

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	13 June 2007
Inspection number	286906

© Crown copyright 2007

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 one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Most pupils attending Loxdale Primary are from White British backgrounds. A small number come from minority ethnic groups although few are at the early stages of learning English. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. A significant proportion are identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities. A larger number of pupils than usual join the school in different year groups. The school operates in an area of social and economic disadvantage and a small but significant number of pupils have extreme emotional and social difficulties. Children start school in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Loxdale Primary is a good school. Its particular strength is the outstanding pastoral care for its pupils. Together with good academic support this ensures pupils receive good care, support and guidance overall. Many children start school with very low self-esteem, but under the sensitive care of all adults in the school, pupils gain confidence in their own capabilities and a strong desire to do well. The process of learning for many of the pupils is slow because of their learning difficulties and disabilities but good teaching and high aspirations for pupils' success supports them well. In 2006, pupils in Year 6 reached broadly average standards in English and mathematics. Overall standards are below average, however, because of the weaker standards in science.

During their time at Loxdale, pupils achieve well. They make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage Unit where they make good progress. Although achievement is good overall it is not always consistent because teaching is variable in some classes and in some subjects, such as science. Standards are rising but the more able pupils are not making as much progress in mathematics and science as they do in English. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It securely underpins pupils' good personal development and well-being and results in pupils enjoying and participating well in all the activities provided. Teachers actively seek ways of making the curriculum stimulating and have started to develop a range of activities to further motivate pupils' interest and good learning. Pupils' use of personal palm held computers (PDAs) in Year 6, for example, supports their learning well. The process of making natural links between subjects so that learning becomes more purposeful is still fairly new and opportunities to develop the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are not promoted sufficiently well in other subjects.

The headteacher provides strong purpose and clear direction for the future development of the school. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and together they make a strong team that provides good leadership and management. The good teamwork and hard work of staff and the positive support of the governing body has ensured good improvement since the previous inspection. The school's evaluation of its work is good. Standards are rising and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is now much stronger. The school has also made good improvements in the assessment of pupils' work and the monitoring of their progress. The capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further by ensuring pupils make good progress throughout the school, especially the more able pupils in mathematics and science.
- Ensure teaching is of a consistently good standard in all subjects and in all classes.
- Use effective links between subjects to promote good learning in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. From their low starting points, most pupils leave the school attaining average standards in English and mathematics. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage Unit, where they make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, and in their language skills and

mathematics. Standards have risen this year in Year 2, although they remain below the national average. Nevertheless, this represents good progress because a large number of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities and a small but significant number of pupils have extreme emotional and social difficulties. Pupils' progress slows in Years 3 and 4 but accelerates again in Years 5 and 6. Standards in English have risen over the last two years, and this year pupils have significantly exceeded their targets in English; standards in mathematics and science are not as high because fewer pupils attain the higher level. The large proportion of pupils who join the school in each class, many of whom have learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress because they are quickly assessed and learning programmes are developed to help them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils enjoy school and try hard in their lessons. When asked what was important to them, pupils said 'their friends, family and their school work'. Pupils show good concentration and respond well to the high levels of praise given to them when they are successful. Pupils behave well and show care for one another. A number of pupils have emotional difficulties and easily 'flare up' when things do not go right. These episodes are becoming far less frequent because staff are skilled at helping them to use strategies to keep calm and see each other's point of view. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They take responsibility willingly and carry out their tasks responsibly. Pupils are proud to be school councillors or 'peer mentors', for example. They make a positive contribution to the life of the school and the community. They are very proud of their wall murals in the toilets, for example. Pupils work with many outside agencies to support local and worldwide charities. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep safe and understand the importance of keeping healthy. Many participate in extra sports activities and they try hard to choose healthy food when they have the chance. Pupils are making positive progress in many areas of their work and in their independent learning skills. They are prepared effectively for the world of work. Attendance is still below average. Most pupils attend regularly and the school carefully monitors the few who do not.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and adults successfully develop pupils' independence, social skills and learning in language and mathematics. Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 where potentially disenchanted pupils are encouraged, motivated and engaged in their learning so they want to do well. The introduction of interactive whiteboards has been a particular success as teachers use them to make lessons stimulating and to support understanding. Lessons are usually well structured and activities well matched to the range of abilities in the class. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. Pupils are given a clear idea of what is to be learnt in each lesson and what they should achieve by the end. In some classes, however, there is less clarity about how to ensure pupils' learning moves forward effectively. The teaching of English is good but aspects of science, such as opportunity for practical investigations, are not as strong and the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in mathematics and science.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and increasingly being adapted to meet pupils' personal and learning needs. New programmes of work have been introduced, especially in English, which are working well. There has been less focus on science and pupils' ability to use and apply their knowledge is not well enough developed. There is a strong focus on pupils' personal, social and health education that has a positive impact on pupils' development. The school uses many links with outside organisations to extend pupils' experiences and to stimulate their interest. Visits and residential trips are used well to develop pupils' interpersonal skills, independence and learning. Short projects that link a variety of subjects are being used successfully to enhance pupils' learning. The school aims to further this process but this is still in the planning stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school understands well how difficulties faced by pupils in their lives can affect their learning. It uses excellent strategies to support them and their families. Parents' positive response to opportunities to extend their own education benefit their children's learning. This partnership with parents is developing well, especially in the Foundation Stage. Successful links with outside agencies, such as the Educational Welfare Officer to improve attendance, ensure pupils are given the best support. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety and for child protection are good. Pupils feel safe and know there is always someone to talk to if they are worried. A parent typically commented, 'My child is happy at school as she is part of the family of staff and her other pupil friends.' Academic support and guidance is good. Pupils' progress is checked regularly and targets are set for the next stage of their learning, although these do not always sufficiently challenge the most able. Marking helps pupils understand how they are getting on and what they have to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership for raising standards and in pastoral care. She has a good understanding of how the school can improve because regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and on pupils' learning. The school development plan sets out an effective agenda for school improvements. There is a very strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff and shared responsibilities give all a sense of ownership and pride in their school. The formation of the senior leadership team is still new but the management structure of shared responsibility is already proving successful in ensuring improvement. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable. The governing body has significantly improved since the previous inspection and now takes a much more active part in strategic planning. A number of difficult decisions about staffing and finance are carefully made. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection, standards are rising and there is a clear commitment to further improve pupils' progress.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children

Inspection of Loxdale Primary School, Bilston, West Midlands, WV14 0PH

I am writing to thank you for welcoming me in your school. I really enjoyed chatting with you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what I thought about your school.

- These are the things that work well.
- This is a good school and all the staff are working hard to help you enjoy your learning and gain confidence in what you can do.
- Most pupils like school and want to do well in their lessons.
- You are making good progress in your work.
- Most of you behave well especially in lessons but some of you have to try really hard to be sensible and not to get upset.
- Teaching is good and teachers help you to understand how to succeed in your work.
- You have a good understanding about how to keep healthy and try to make positive choices about what you eat and how to keep safe.
- You enjoy working together to make the school a better place.
- The staff look after you extremely well and help you feel safe and secure.
- Your school is well led and managed and all the staff work well together to make the school even better.

What I have asked the school to do now.

- Make sure you all do as well as you can throughout the school, especially those of you who find work easy in mathematics and science.
- Make sure that all the subjects you learn are well taught.
- Help you to learn even better by linking subjects together in ways that are interesting and which will help you improve your skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and reach your targets. Thank you again for helping me with my questions.

Hazel Callaghan Lead inspector