

Templefield Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109527
Local Authority	BEDFORDSHIRE
Inspection number	288415
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	David Benstock

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Brenda Manning
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Birch
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002
School address	Malham Close Flitwick Bedfordshire MK45 1AJ
Telephone number	01525713625
Fax number	01525713625

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than average, having recently increased in size. It serves pupils mainly from the rural town of Flitwick. Children enter with broadly average attainment and a wide range of social backgrounds. Pupils are predominantly White British and very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nearly all speak English as the first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the percentage with statements of special educational need are both broadly average. The school gained Football Charter Status in 2005, achieved the Investors in People Award in 2006 and has been accredited under the Healthy Schools Initiative this year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils enjoy being here, commenting that one of the best things about the school is, 'that teachers are so kind and helpful.'

Pupils are achieving well. They enter the school with differing levels of competence and experiences but in a short time benefit from the organised and supportive environment in the Foundation Unit that helps them to progress well, especially in aspects of language development. Over Key Stage 1, progress is good as a result of the good teaching. Standards, as shown by the performance in the Year 2 National Curriculum Assessments in 2006, are above average. Progress in Key Stage 2 continues to be good with notable impact from some effective curriculum initiatives such as 'philosophy in learning'. This has been extended from an activity for gifted pupils to an opportunity across the whole of the final year.

The good level of care, guidance and support ensures that the personal development of pupils is effective. This is reflected in their polite, responsive manner with visitors and their positive attitudes to school. The very occasional bullying incident is handled well by the school, but communication with parents is not always effective in allaying their anxieties over such matters. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well and ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs. Good support by teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils with learning difficulties to progress well. Excellent support in the 'Ark Nurture Centre' is provided for those who have emotional difficulties. Teaching is not always effectively engaging pupils, resulting in their becoming restless when too much time is allocated to an activity or the presentation lacks sparkle. Pupils express their appreciation of the good curriculum, for example in the extent of practical activities, trips and extracurricular opportunities.

After the last inspection the school experienced staffing difficulties and there was some decline, with key issues not being addressed. Following the appointment of a new headteacher three years ago, greater sharing of leadership responsibilities and a restructured governing body, the school has entered a phase of sustained improvement. Leadership and management are now good. Staff are very committed and there is exceptional team spirit. Governors are supportive, active and more involved in strategic planning. Partnerships with other schools, and support agencies are very good. The capacity to improve further is good and the school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make teaching more consistently stimulating, using time effectively so that pupils' interest, concentration and pace of learning are maintained in lessons.
- Ensure communication with parents is more effective in allaying anxieties about provision for their children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with a wide range of competence and skills. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach or exceed expected standards by the start of Year 1. Significant impact on children's achievement has been realised by the focus on social development and strategies to improve language skills through linking sounds to letters.

Pupils reach above average standards overall by the end of Key Stage 1 and progress is good. This has been reflected in the Year 2 National Curriculum assessments in 2006, which were above average in writing and mathematics. Reading was not so strong and, in particular, the percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels was less than in the other core disciplines. The school has a focus now on improving reading and the impact of this is already being felt.

At Key Stage 2 assessments in the present Year 4 show that progress is much improved over the past year and is on target, with the expected gain in reading and mathematics, but somewhat less progress has been made in writing. Standards seen in lessons overall are above expectation for the pupils' ages.

The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good owing to the good support provided. The few pupils with ethnic backgrounds other than White British make progress in line with others because they are fully included in the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop into sensible young people who usually get on well and readily consider each other's needs. They have a strong appreciation of right and wrong and are developing a good understanding of their own and other cultures. For example, pupils participate in local events such as Flitwick Arts Week Poetry Competition and help to support a school in Ethiopia. They understand about keeping themselves safe and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle effectively, especially as the school gains accreditation under the Healthy Schools initiative. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy coming to school.

A few parents have expressed concerns over the behaviour of a minority of pupils and the ensuing impact on other children's enjoyment of school and their ability to learn and make progress. The school is aware and is dealing with these issues, including making good use of the 'Ark' nurture centre and, where necessary, exclusion.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They help to influence day-to-day school life by voicing their views through the school council and are currently working on the production of a school newspaper. The good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and a strong sense of working together are contributing well to pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lessons well, taking account of the different abilities of pupils. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught well. Teachers are making links between different subjects, for instance in developing writing across the curriculum, to make learning more relevant. They also evaluate lessons well, so that the next stage of pupils' learning is appropriate to their needs.

Teachers keep careful track of pupils' progress and their marking of work gives pupils a clear indication of how they can improve it. Pupils are also developing the ability to assess their own and others' work. There is good planning to support pupils with learning difficulties and extend more able pupils.

Pupils generally enjoy lessons and respond positively to their learning. When teachers use a variety of methods, for instance in Year 2 using drama to stimulate pupils' writing, learning is good. On occasions, however, teachers spend too long on discussion and the pace of a lesson slackens, pupils' interest is lost and they become restless.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers its pupils a good curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 learn French and philosophy as well as the normal national curriculum subjects. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education, which contributes well to pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about healthy eating and the need to stay safe, for instance when Year 1 were handling live 'chicks' in a lesson. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and gifted and able pupils are also supported well.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is enhanced greatly by the very good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs, activities and visits to places of interest, including a residential visit for Year 4, as well as visitors to school, for instance for a 'Roman Day'. Pupils are introduced to a good range of other cultures, for example through an Africa week, but opportunities for them to appreciate the diversity of cultures within their own society are more limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good level of care in the school is ensuring a happy and secure environment in which pupils achieve well. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection and health and safety are fully in place.

Provision for pupils' medical welfare is well established and several staff have a first aid qualification. Very good links with external agencies contribute greatly in meeting individual pupils' needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported with the help of experienced teaching assistants and the 'Ark' nurture centre provides a very supportive area for vulnerable pupils and those with emotional development needs.

There are good systems for teachers to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics, which help them to set them challenging targets. In all subjects assessment is developing so that pupils are having a clearer understanding of what is expected of them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has shown clear vision and drive in addressing issues for the school, improving the curriculum and raising achievement. Senior leaders, who have significant responsibility for key aspects of the school's work, support her very well. All staff work closely as a team to contribute greatly to school improvement. Teachers and higher-level teaching assistants are developing their roles and responsibilities as leaders very well and this is impacting on the improvement of the quality of provision.

Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of teaching by the headteacher, well supplemented by 'Learning Walks', enables a strong feel of the overall effectiveness to be gained. All leaders need to be more involved but the process is providing a clear base for good self-evaluation.

Data are analysed and used well to evaluate performance and identify where improvement is needed. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is shown in the way all pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school. Governors are supportive, challenging and hold the school to account. Over the past few years they have become much more aware of their roles. Financial management is good and resources, including ICT equipment, are of good quality although there are few interactive whiteboards. The pleasant learning environment of the school helps to heighten the pupils' enjoyment.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

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?	2
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	2
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

22 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Templefield Lower School, Malham Close, Flitwick, Bedfordshire, MK45 1AJ

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, seeing you learn and hearing about what you do.

We think you go to a good school, learn well and we were pleased to hear that you find the teachers especially kind and helpful. We think that most of you behave particularly well and are very polite to visitors. Your teachers tell you what you need to learn next when they mark your work. Many of you seem to take part in extra things arranged at lunchtime or after school. We think your teachers and other adults are very caring, look after you and that the school is run well. There are some things we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do to make the school even better.

- We have asked your teachers to try to make the work that you do more exciting and to make sure that some activities are not too long so that you do not lose your interest in the lesson. You can help by trying not to get restless whilst the teacher is helping you learn.
- We have also asked the headteacher to explain to your families more about how the school decides things, keeps you safe and deals with any pupils who are unpleasant to others.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at the school and do well in the future.

Best wishes

David Benstock

Lead inspector