

Lipson Vale Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	113298
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	289575
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Diggory Vowles
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2001
School address	Bernice Terrace Lipson Plymouth PL4 7HW
Telephone number	01752 224801
Fax number	01752 252314

Age group	4–11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The area surrounding this large primary school has some socio-economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average and there are a small number of pupils who are learning English for the first time. The attainment of children when they enter the Reception classes varies from year to year between below and well below average. A new senior leadership team was established in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. The key to the school's rapidly rising standards, and pupils' greatly improved achievement is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Together with the newly established leadership team, he has instilled a sense of urgency in the need to drive up standards and the quality of teaching and learning has been considerably enhanced due to the actions he has taken. This good overall leadership and management mean that underachievement has been successfully addressed. Parents appreciate the changes being made and wholeheartedly support the school. As one commented, 'A good foundation is being laid for my child's future education.'

The good provision in the Reception classes ensures that children get a flying start to their schooling, enabling them to make good progress. Standards have improved greatly throughout the school, particularly in mathematics. However, there is more to do in English to ensure that the quality of boys' writing more closely matches that of the girls. Standards overall are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Some pupils working at a just below average level do not always make as much progress as their peers because tasks are not always matched specifically enough to their needs.

Children in the Reception classes make good progress in their personal development, learning how to work and play together happily. However, there is scope for them to have more say in choosing and planning their activities. Pupils are vivacious, enthusiastic and love coming to school. 'We all fit in and the atmosphere is great,' commented one Year 6 pupil. They have a say in many key decisions, from the appointment of the headteacher, to the travel plan and layout of the environment around the school. They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and show an exceptional awareness of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. They know how to keep themselves safe. These factors, together with their good behaviour and excellent attitudes to their work, all play their part in ensuring pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. The staff are committed to the all-round development of the pupils. Pupils say there is always someone they can turn to and with whom they can share their problems. Systems to monitor pupils' progress are good; they clearly understand what they need to do to reach the next level of learning and are involved well in the setting of targets. All these features contribute to the good care, guidance and support pupils receive.

Teachers plan carefully, make a good effort to motivate pupils and ensure lessons are lively. Much teaching observed during the inspection was good, particularly that in Years 5 and 6. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory because progress across the school, although improving, is not yet consistently good in all classes. The curriculum has been extensively reviewed over the last two years and is now creative and interesting. A wide range of visits and visitors enhances pupils' learning and the teaching of modern foreign languages is an added bonus. However, the curriculum is satisfactory overall because planning does not take fully into account subjects and topics which are likely to stimulate boys' interests and enthusiasm.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan and provide stimuli which will motivate boys to tackle writing more enthusiastically.
- Ensure that provision for pupils of just below average ability is matched more precisely to their needs.

- Provide more opportunities for children in the Reception classes to choose and plan their own activities. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Children make a good start in Reception and make good progress across all areas of learning. When they enter Year 1, standards are a little below those expected for their age. Throughout the school, there has been significant improvement in mathematics and English with pupils well on track to meet the challenging targets set for 2007. The school has successfully targeted boys' reading and improved their performance. However, there is a distinct difference in the performance of boys and girls in writing, with boys not performing as well. The school has identified this through its rigorous tracking procedures and is in the process of investigating how it can best motivate boys to write more willingly through topics that stimulate and interest them. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress, as do those learning English as an additional language, because the quality of the support they receive is appropriately matched to their needs. However, some teachers do not always match tasks sufficiently well to the learning needs of pupils who are just below average, which means these pupils do not always perform as well as they should.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children in the Reception class make great strides in their personal, social and emotional development. However, some opportunities are missed to involve them in planning their own learning activities.

Pupils maturely undertake responsibilities such as playground equipment monitors in Year 2, or helping to resolve playground disputes in Year 6. They eagerly take on fundraising for local, national and international charities and show a real responsibility towards the environment through their recycling activities. They have an excellent awareness of the music and art of other cultures through themed activities such as multicultural week, which also gives them an outstanding insight into life in multicultural Britain. They are thoughtful and reflective and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent relationships and good teamwork prepare pupils well for the world of work. This is enhanced by enterprise activities such as calculating the profit to donate to charity made from making and selling smoothies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in the Reception classes is good and a wide range of interesting activities is planned for the children. These show a good awareness of the needs of individual children and enable them to learn effectively. A strong monitoring programme has enabled school leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning has improved greatly over the last two years. Pupils speak enthusiastically of how lessons are now made interesting and fun for them and of the

good relationships they have with their teachers. Pupils participate eagerly in lessons and their work shows that many have made good progress during this year and are learning effectively. However, good teaching and learning are not yet consistent across all classes. Some pupils at a just below average level do not receive sufficient support with their learning which means they do not always do as well as they should. Marking is generally good. Pupils say that it usually identifies what they need to do to make progress and gives guidance as to how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Outdoor play and work activities are stimulating and exciting and make a significant contribution to the good curriculum for children in Reception. Recent curriculum innovations, such as the development of music and science areas to create an outside classroom, aimed especially at making learning more enjoyable, relevant and exciting, are successfully motivating the pupils across the school. However, there are not yet enough activities which appeal to boys. A very good programme successfully promotes pupils' health, safety and well-being. This contributes strongly to pupils' exceptionally good personal development. The curriculum is successfully enriched and enhanced by a good range of visits, visitors and well attended extra-curricular activities. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory and they receive appropriate support in class.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The arrangements for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are good, with the result that all pupils feel exceptionally safe and well cared for. Child protection procedures and safeguarding arrangements are secure. The last two years have seen very good systems and incentives established to promote regular attendance and these are resulting in good improvement. Good systems are in place for monitoring pupils' academic achievement. Regular reviews of progress enable teachers to modify the support provided. Pupils are involved in setting targets so they have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. The support given to children with learning difficulties or disabilities enables them to make satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and the senior leadership team have a very clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve and are taking effective action to bring this about. Members of the leadership team have been strategically placed to support and develop all areas of the school. This strategy has been particularly effective because they provide effective role models of good practice and, as a result, teaching and learning have significantly improved. The impact of actions to improve mathematics and English is evident in pupils' work, although there is still more to be done to improve boys' writing. Leaders at all levels have been given full responsibility for their subjects and areas. This they have taken on with verve and enthusiasm. They are held to account by the headteacher and provide regular updates as to progress made against targets set. The school uses data well to check its own performance and training is put in place to address any weaknesses. This has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching and learning. This rigorous and robust monitoring has ensured that standards have risen quickly

within a relatively short space of time and the school knows how well it is performing. Consequently, it has good capacity to move on further because of this comprehensive knowledge, understanding and commitment from all staff. The governors are supportive and knowledgeable. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in school evaluation.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	3
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	3
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

25 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lipson Vale Primary School, Plymouth, PL4 7HW.

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. We think your school gives you a sound education and is working hard to make it even better than this. This is what we thought about your school:

- You behave well and are really keen to learn.
- You are doing much better in English and mathematics this year.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise.
- The curriculum covers all the subjects you are supposed to learn and you enjoy the visits and visitors which bring learning alive for you.
- Teachers help you to learn effectively so that you make the progress you should, and you say learning is often made fun.
- The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.

There are some things we think can be improved:

- The boys need more help to improve their writing. You could help here by giving your teachers some ideas as to what really interests you.
- Some of you who find learning a little more difficult are not always given tasks that are matched to your needs.
- We would like the children in the Reception classes to have more say in choosing and planning their activities.

We hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead inspector