

# Larkrise Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115035
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX
<b>Inspection number</b>	290108
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	162
<b>School</b>	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pat Hodson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jonathan Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2002
<b>School address</b>	Dorset Avenue Great Baddow Chelmsford Essex CM2 9UB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 471654
<b>Fax number</b>	01245 473058

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Larkrise is a smaller than average sized primary school. The large majority of pupils come from the immediate area. Almost all are of White British heritage. Many pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds and the number entitled to free school meals is significantly above the national average. The percentage with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above expected levels. The school gained 'Investor in People' status in 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Larkrise is a good school and offers good value for money. The school has gone through a turbulent time in the past few years and there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff, including a new headteacher. The school is on an upward trend and the leadership and management of the headteacher has played an important part in this. He is much respected by the school community and he has welded the staff into a very good team. Together they have improved the school's effectiveness to its current level and there is both great determination and good capacity to continue this improvement. There has been a successful focus placed on improving the quality of the school's provision, the pupils' behaviour and their enjoyment of school. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support for pupils are all good. This has quickened pupils' progress and their achievement and has led to pupils in Years 3 to 6 working at standards expected for their age. They achieve particularly well in their personal development. Behaviour is good and pupils have very positive attitudes to school and learning. They thoroughly enjoy all that the school has to offer. As one pupil said, 'It is a nice place; you learn a lot, feel safe and make a lot of friends.' Parents agree and are overwhelmingly supportive. Almost all say that their children enjoy school and are safe and well cared for. As one parent said, 'Larkrise is a caring school that successfully promotes a positive ethos.'

Children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment that is well below expected levels. Due to the good provision in this class, they make good progress though, on entry to Year 1, slightly less than half attain the expected learning goals. Despite generally satisfactory progress in most year groups, standards in national tests for 11-year-olds have been significantly below average for the past three years. However, recent improvements to teaching and the curriculum are now having a real impact, such that current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that are close to, though still slightly below the national average in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, this represents good achievement in relation to their attainments on entry which are well below average.

The school's leadership has good systems in place to evaluate provision and to check on pupils' progress. In some areas, subject leaders make a good contribution to these evaluations, though this is not yet the case in all subjects. Consequently, there remain some inconsistencies in teaching and learning that are currently barriers to raising standards further. In addition, whilst the curriculum is of good quality, there remain too few additional opportunities provided to extend pupils who find learning easy or have particular talents.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by making sure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently as good as in the best lessons.
- Strengthen the role of subject leaders to ensure that all contribute to the school's systems for checking the quality of provision and pupils' attainment.
- Extend curricular opportunities for gifted and talented pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Historically, progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 has been good and has led to standards that are close to the national average at the end of Year

2. Progress and achievement has been much more limited in Years 3 to 6. In consequence, standards have been inadequate at the end of Year 6 for the past three years and were exceptionally low in the 2006 tests. However, there is evidence of significant recent improvements in pupils' attainment and achievement, brought about by the positive impact of actions initiated by the headteacher and senior staff. The school's detailed tracking data show clearly that current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that are only slightly below average in English and mathematics and that in science, pupils are working at nationally expected levels. These pupils have made good progress during their time in the school. In addition, Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils are working close to age expected levels. Due to the good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, these pupils achieve well and regularly meet their challenging targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils enjoy school and mix well. Their behaviour in and around the school is good. Although there are a few pupils whose behaviour can be challenging, they are managed very well and are seldom allowed to affect the learning of other children. Levels of attendance remain below the national average. Despite strenuous efforts made by the school, there are a few families who do not place a high priority on prompt and regular attendance. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy life style and they take on responsibilities with pride and efficiency. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education. Although their personal skills are good, skills in literacy and numeracy are more limited.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good quality of the teaching and learning has boosted pupils' achievement and progress in the last year. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that the differing learning needs of all groups of pupils are met and they provide interesting activities that capture the pupils' interest. Staff manage the pupils well and this results in very good relationships in lessons and a purposeful atmosphere in which pupils become enthusiastic learners and look forward to lessons. Teachers share with pupils the purpose of the lesson and this helps them to know what they are intended to learn. Most of all, teachers check pupils' progress very well and at the end of lessons they ensure that objectives have been met by using good questioning skills. When they are not met, teachers modify future appropriately. On occasion, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. The pace of learning sometimes dips, particularly amongst pupils who find learning hard, because teachers do not always provide sufficiently good explanations.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum is well balanced and is enhanced effectively by visitors to the school and after-school clubs. The Foundation Stage curriculum is particularly good. Teachers throughout school plan lessons well to ensure that pupils' communication, literacy and information and communication technology skills are included in many lessons. This aids the pupils' achievement and encourages them to work co-operatively and share ideas as well as providing valuable links

between subjects. For example, in a Year 2 project on the polar region, pupils considered the changing climate, the habitat of polar bears and designs for a sleigh that could be adapted for warmer conditions. The curriculum effectively meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, through a combination of effective in-class support and well-targeted teaching in smaller groups. However, the curriculum arrangements for gifted and talented pupils remain informal and are an area to be developed.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a warm, friendly and supportive environment that ensures the pupils are happy and feel secure. Pupils are confident that they can discuss problems, that staff know them well and they are valued as individuals. Links with outside agencies are very good and extend the high level of care provided for pupils within the school. There are outstanding procedures for safeguarding and protecting pupils. Inclusion of all pupils is a high priority. The rigorous use of assessment information to monitor progress has been a recent focus and has been very effective. Pupils are clear in their understanding of how well they are doing, they know what their targets are in reading, writing and mathematics and what they need to do to improve their work. Much has been done to provide workshops for parents to help improve parent skills and an understanding of curricular areas so they can support their children more effectively. However, the school has not developed a register to track the achievements of gifted and talented pupils beyond the systems that are in place to track pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and deputy work closely together and recent actions have started to have an impact on the considerable shortcomings in pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6. These actions have been based on effective processes for evaluating the school's effectiveness and have led to good planning for school improvement. The impact is evident in pupils' stronger progress. However, not all subject leaders are directly involved in monitoring provision and pupils' progress in their subjects. A further improvement has been the leadership and management of pupils that have learning difficulties and disabilities. Previous weaknesses have been removed and the school now caters for the large proportion of pupils that have learning difficulties or disabilities particularly well. Senior leaders have taken great care to ensure that these pupils are fully included. These significant improvements in provision since the previous inspection show that there is good capacity for further improvement. There have been very many changes in the membership of the governing body since the last inspection. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and needs and they provide the headteacher with satisfactory support. They are starting to influence the strategic development of the school because governors are also committed to securing on-going improvement in the school's performance.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
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

1 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Larkrise Primary School, Dorset Avenue, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9UB.

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you very much for making us so welcome. We were impressed with your friendliness and good behaviour and your very sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other.

Yours is a good school and here are some of the good things we found.

- Your behaviour is good, you enjoy school and play together well.
- All the adults work hard to make sure that you are safe and cared for.
- Your headteacher is doing a good job.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and fun and provide a good range of activities for you to enjoy.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to work on three things to make your school even better.

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by making sure that all lessons are as good as the best ones in the school.
- Making sure that teachers who are responsible for subjects check other teachers' lessons and how well you are doing in those subjects.
- Provide special activities for those of you that find learning particularly easy or have a special talent.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and to keep your targets constantly in mind so you can achieve them as quickly as possible.

With best wishes

Keith Sadler Lead Inspector