



Thistly Meadow Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 119956
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291582
Inspection dates 28–29 September 2006
Reporting inspector Anthony Dobell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hospital Lane
School category	Community		Blaby
Age range of pupils	4–11		Leicester LE8 4FE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2775648
Number on roll (school)	214	Fax number	0116 2775648
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Colin Chapman
		Headteacher	K Allen
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	28–29 September 2006	291582

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves the large village of Blaby, which is some seven miles south west of Leicester. Almost half the pupils come from outside the school's immediate area because parents choose this school for their children. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

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 with the potential to become outstanding. Good leadership has enabled the school to improve well since its last inspection. The headteacher and her colleagues have a clear understanding of what the school does well and where it can improve; for example, they appreciate that the satisfactory provision for the children in Reception needs to be improved and that systems for assessing pupils' standards and helping them to make further progress are not sufficiently rigorous. There is a clear unity of purpose in the school and all adults are passionate for all pupils to achieve their potential. Given this, the school is in a good position to improve further.

Standards are above average because pupils achieve well. Progress is satisfactory in Reception and good in Years 1 to 6, although too few pupils attain the higher Level 3 in the national tests at the end of Year 2. The school recognises that progress in writing lags behind other areas and has plans in place to improve this. Work is conscientiously marked, but marking does not consistently show pupils how they are doing and how to improve their work.

Pupils make good progress because they are well taught. They enjoy learning because 'teachers make lessons interesting and fun'. Because they are happy and secure in school, pupils' personal development is good. Their social development is outstanding and they behave well both in class and at play. They take very good care of each other. Their personal care and support is outstanding and, as one pupil said, 'this is a very happy, friendly school and everyone wants to come to school'. Their enjoyment is also reflected in the way in which they support the many clubs and activities available to them. Pupils and their parents appreciate the high quality opportunities for music and drama which the school provides. The large majority of parents are very positive about the school.

Pupils have a good understanding of the need to exercise regularly, to eat healthy food and to stay safe. Their involvement in the school and the local community is outstanding and they are proud of their support for charities. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education and their future lives, for example, pupils responsible for the school's chickens sell the eggs in order to pay for the chickens' food. In this way, they gain an early understanding of financial discipline.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to understand more clearly how well they are doing so that they know how to raise their standards and to make further progress.
- Improve the provision for children in Reception so that they make good progress in an exciting and stimulating learning environment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with levels of understanding and learning skills which cover a wide range but are average overall. They make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning but their writing skills are not well developed when they enter Year 1. The school is aware of the need to improve this aspect of learning. A newly appointed leader for Reception is planning to improve provision for the children in this class with a view to improving progress.

In the national tests at the end of Year 2, standards have been above average for each of the last five years for which national comparisons are available. This demonstrates that pupils make good progress. However, in 2005 and 2006, more able pupils did not make enough progress in writing and mathematics.

At the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in the national tests were significantly above average from 2002 to 2005, which shows impressive progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils explain that this good progress is because their learning is interesting and their successes give them further enthusiasm. One pupil said to an inspector 'lessons are really, really exciting – school is brilliant'. The school is concerned to ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are valued for what they can offer. This gives all pupils the confidence to make effective progress. Learning tasks are carefully graded so that pupils at different stages of learning can build well on their existing levels of understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their social development is outstanding. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and pupils value these opportunities and develop very caring attitudes. Very good relationships throughout the school create a happy and supportive school community in which pupils feel valued for what they can offer. They develop into confident, caring and articulate young people.

Behaviour is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, although a few tend to chatter in class. Their enjoyment of school is illustrated by their above average attendance. They are proud of the school council which, they feel, gives them an effective voice in developing the school. They are enthusiastic about their fundraising and such activities as distributing harvest produce. They are very sensitive to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and are beginning to understand that privileges go alongside responsibilities. The school tries hard to increase pupils' understanding of life in a culturally diverse society, and this understanding is good.

Effective personal development and a clear sense of well-being encourage pupils to try hard with their work. These factors promote their good achievement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers work hard to plan interesting learning activities which motivate pupils to work with interest and sustained concentration. Teachers' questioning is challenging and reinforces and extends pupils' understanding. Lessons include a range of learning tasks which are targeted carefully at groups of pupils at different stages of learning so that all are able to learn effectively and make good progress.

Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together and support pupils with learning difficulties well. These pupils make progress at the same rate as others. Throughout the school, very effective use is made of interactive whiteboards which successfully engages pupils' interest. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good and meets all requirements. In Reception, the curriculum is satisfactory. The use of the outdoor area for these children is underdeveloped. The school has identified this as an area for development. Teachers are also analysing how to use learning in one subject to support learning in others more successfully.

The curriculum is very well enriched by visits, including residential opportunities, French, and music and drama activities at a high level. Parents and pupils speak warmly of the musical and drama productions in the theatre at the high school which attract the wider community as well as members of the school community. Good links with other schools and the local community enhance pupils' learning further and support their good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The personal care and support provided for pupils are outstanding. Pupils comment that 'everyone wants to come to school' because they feel happy and secure. They are confident to ask adults for help and advice with any difficulties. They also speak warmly of the Years 5 and 6 'Trust Team' as a source of comfort and understanding with any problems. Provision for first aid, health and safety and child protection is secure. This feeling of security helps pupils to make good progress.

Academic guidance for pupils, however, is only satisfactory. Insufficient use is made of information from assessments to set individual targets for pupils to help them to raise their standards. They have few opportunities to assess their own learning and manage their own progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has accurately analysed where the school is effective and where there is scope for development. Astute leadership is enabling the school to build on its many strengths and to develop areas which are less strong at a sensible pace. Initiatives are carefully tailored to ensure that pupils benefit from provision of high quality, for example, planning time for teachers is being organised in a way which enables all pupils to benefit from good quality learning in music. Resources are deployed well throughout the school. The senior management team is newly formed and is developing clear views about how the school can move forward systematically.

Governors are effective. They support the school and many have first hand knowledge of its work from regular visits. They value its role as a community school. They are aware that the school has a large accumulated surplus and plan to use it to improve accommodation and resources. They ensure that the school's strategic planning meets its needs systematically. However, success criteria in the school development plan are not sufficiently specific.

Thoughtful and effective leadership and management throughout the school mean that it is in a good position to improve further.

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	3
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	1
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	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?	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?	3

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.

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

Thank you for welcoming us into your school, being so friendly and polite, and telling us about your learning and your lives in school. We think that yours is a good school in many ways.

What we liked about the school

- You try hard with your work, enjoy learning and make good progress.
- You are happy in school, attend regularly and enjoy your music and drama especially.
- You behave sensibly, get on very well together and are kind to each other.
- Your teachers try very hard to make your lessons interesting and take very good care of you.
- You know how important it is to keep safe and healthy.
- You enjoy taking responsibilities and carry them out well.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to make the school even better.

What we have asked the school to do

- We have asked teachers to help you to understand more clearly how well you are doing and how you can improve your work.
- We have asked the school to make opportunities for learning even better for children in Reception.

We enjoyed our two days in your school very much and wish you well for the future.