



Mountfields Lodge School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119994
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291598
Inspection date 18 October 2006
Reporting inspector Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Epinal Way
School category	Community		Loughborough
Age range of pupils	4-11		LE11 3GE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01509 214119
Number on roll (school)	530	Fax number	01509 264989
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Jean Lewis
		Headteacher	Sheila Grice
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Mountfields Lodge is an above average sized primary school that serves a mixed community of rented and private housing. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage although several other ethnic groups are represented at the school. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for eight weeks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

It comes as no surprise that Mountfields Lodge is popular and oversubscribed as it is a good school. 'It's marvellous', wrote one parent. 'The school is caring and stimulating', said another. Parents appreciate that their children attend a good school as do the pupils. 'Really great things happen', was a typical comment.

Pupils reach high standards by the end of Year 6 and achieve well. Pupils make good progress because of the effective leadership of the previous headteacher who ensured that the school continued to improve after its last inspection. The change of headteacher has gone smoothly and leadership and management remain good. The new headteacher has quickly developed good working relationships with pupils, staff and governors. She has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and there is good capacity for further improvement.

Good teaching also contributes significantly to the pupils' good progress. Children get a good start to school in the Reception classes. Parents of the youngest children are pleased with how quickly they settle in. Pupils are keen to do well and appreciate that their teachers make lessons interesting and exciting. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and this contributes effectively to the pupils' successes in their learning. The needs of individuals are important to the school. Tasks and activities are matched carefully to pupils' different abilities and understanding. Until recently, however, pupils did not make as much progress in Key Stage 1 as those in Key Stage 2, with the result that standards in writing are lower than in other subjects for the younger pupils. This situation has been successfully addressed, so that achievement is now more even throughout the school. The school has a good curriculum but pupils' progress is very occasionally not always tracked effectively and, though rare, a pupil can 'slip through the net' and not make the progress they are capable of.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils feel safe and well cared for as a result of the good levels of care provided by the school. They are confident that if they have any concerns there is someone to talk to. Pupils enjoy all of the different opportunities they have to participate in sporting activities. 'We get loads of exercise to stay healthy', was one pupil's comment. Pupils are pleased that they have a say in the running of the school. For example, the school council was involved in the appointment of the new headteacher. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously, whether it is the oldest pupils looking after the youngest children during lunchtime or raising funds for people in the wider community who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils fondly remember last year's sponsored silence for 'Children in Need', whilst admitting that some of them found it very difficult not to speak!

What the school should do to improve further

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- Raise standards in writing for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the use of assessment information to track pupils' individual progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children enter Reception with skills, abilities and understanding that are fairly similar to the levels expected for children of their age. Occasionally, some year groups are below these levels. The good start children get in Reception is maintained through Years 1 and 2. Standards are above average, although writing is weaker than reading and mathematics. This is a better picture than in previous years, when some of the younger pupils did not make as rapid progress as those in Key Stage 2. Standards in Year 6 are above average.

The school sets realistic but challenging academic targets. More able pupils are challenged well and this is reflected in the high proportion gaining higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well catered for. Consequently, they make good progress in relation to their starting points. Parents of these pupils are particularly pleased with how well they do. Equally, pupils who speak English as an additional language make the same good progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Reception children settle into school quickly because of the good provision for their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and enjoy what is on offer. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils discuss other religions and beliefs respectfully. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved, although one or two occasionally display inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They approach visitors confidently, asking if there is anything they can do to help. Levels of attendance are above average reflecting the pupils' enthusiasm for school, although a few are always late for school. Pupils work well together. It is not unusual for them to start their own projects, for example, to raise funds for a charity in the wider community. Because of the very good basic skills they achieve, pupils are well prepared for their next school and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and pupils learn well and make good progress. Lessons are planned and organised well. Particular attention is paid to different ability groups so that pupils are given work that is appropriate to their needs and understanding. Pupils are good at identifying whether their work is too easy or too hard because self-evaluation is encouraged successfully. Teachers' interactions with pupils are good and they usually quickly assess pupils who need extra help or more difficult work. Teaching assistants are used well to provide good additional support, particularly to those pupils who find

learning more difficult. Teachers' marking varies in quality. Although much is helpful, written comments do not always provide pupils with sufficient information on how to improve or develop further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum enables pupils to develop their personal and social skills well and make good progress as they move through the school. The school acknowledges that writing standards are not as high as other subjects at Key Stage 1. They have introduced a number of strategies to address this issue. It is too early to judge their impact.

The curriculum is enhanced well. All pupils are taught French and benefit from specialist teaching in music and physical education and annual visits from authors and theatre groups. The extensive range of extra-curricular sporting activities is greatly appreciated by the pupils, as is the opportunity to take swimming lessons as part of the school curriculum. Non-sporting activities are also provided after school. A programme of residential visits for pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 is popular and contributes well to the pupils' social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know pupils well and the welfare and safety of pupils is given a high priority. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well. The school has good links with external organisations to provide additional support to more vulnerable pupils and those at the early stages of learning English. Pupils feel that they are offered good guidance and advice about their work and how to achieve their personal learning targets. Many of the older pupils spoke positively about the 'thought book' where they can write confidentially to their teachers expressing any concerns about their academic work or personal lives. Pupils' individual progress is tracked less effectively. This very occasionally leads to individual pupils not making the progress they are capable of.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Although the school is going through a transition period, the new headteacher has settled in well. She has been well supported by the senior staff and the chair of governors through her induction period. It was also helpful that the school was led and managed well and running effectively before she arrived. Parents and pupils have been impressed by her introduction of new school rules and the 'consequences' programme. Pupils are pleased that good behaviour is now more systematically recognised and that behaviour has improved. The headteacher has continued the good monitoring and evaluation of school performance undertaken by her predecessor. She

has already managed to visit all classes to observe teachers teaching but acknowledges the need to track pupils' individual progress more effectively. The governors' contribution to the running of the school is good. They have, for example, taken on responsibility for managing the school kitchens to ensure pupils are offered high quality and healthy meals. Governors have worked hard to ensure that resources, accommodation and staffing levels are good.

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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.

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 making me feel welcome. I enjoyed my visit to find out how well your school is doing. When I walked around at lunchtime, it was so nice that many of you took time to come and say hello. Those of you that I spoke to told me that your school is good and I agree.

You make good progress because you are taught well. By the time you leave school, you reach high standards. You all enjoy school and attendance levels are above average. All of the staff care about you and they keep you safe and secure. Most of you are well behaved and friendly. You keep yourselves healthy by eating sensibly and taking lots of exercise during PE and after school. The school provides many extra activities and you enjoy these.

The school has very little wrong with it but I have asked the new headteacher, staff and governors to improve a couple of things. The younger pupils do not always do as well in their writing as they do in other subjects so the school is going to look at this. Very occasionally, one or two of you do not always make the progress you should do. The school is now going to keep an eye on everyone's progress.

Best wishes for the future.