

Lyncrest Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121922
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292263
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennifer Brooks
Headteacher	Sally O'Neil
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001
School address	Lyncrest Avenue Northampton NN5 5PE
Telephone number	01604 751336
Fax number	01604 751336

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lyncrest is an average-sized school. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds but an increasing number are from different countries and minority ethnic groups. A small but increasing number speak other languages at home. An above-average proportion of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities and more pupils join and leave the school in each year group than is found nationally. Children enter the Nursery with a more limited range of knowledge and skills than is expected for their age.

The school changed from a first school to a primary in 2004 as part of the reorganisation of schools in Northampton. The first national tests for pupils in Year 6 were taken in 2005. The school was also included in a Private Finance Initiative and has been undergoing significant building work, which has had an effect on the life of the school and on aspects of the curriculum. There have been a large number of changes of staff in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Lyncrest Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school has been through many recent changes. The introduction of pupils into Years 5 and 6 necessitated changes in staffing, teaching and the curriculum. This has taken some time but can now be seen to be working more successfully. Standards are significantly below average in Year 6 but pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because the teaching and curriculum in the Nursery and Reception are good. Good progress can also be seen in Year 2 and Year 6, where teaching is particularly effective. This improved progress has not had a significant impact on raising standards because of pupils' poor progress in the past. Progress in Years 1 to 6 is now generally satisfactory because teaching is satisfactory. The sharing of good practice and teachers' raised expectations of what pupils need to achieve are now having a positive effect. Lessons are better linked to the learning needs of the pupils in the class and activities are more varied and interesting, which promotes pupils' motivation to learn. Pupils' progress in Year 6 is accelerating and they are developing many positive personal skills that prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of learning.

A satisfactory curriculum is enhanced by many additional activities that enhance pupils' learning and skills. A strength of the curriculum is the promotion of pupils' good personal development and well-being. Relationships throughout the school are good and most pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pastoral care is good and many positive strategies are used to support pupils with personal and learning difficulties. Care, support and guidance are only satisfactory because procedures to identify the rate of pupils' progress, and to help pupils understand how to improve, are still new and are not consistently applied.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been a strong focus on raising standards and pupils' achievement and this is having a positive impact. Systems for checking pupils' standards and progress have been introduced and are used effectively to identify those who need greater support or challenge. The system is not enabling senior staff to clearly identify pupils' progress from year to year or to easily access information about specific groups of pupils. Many subject managers are very new to their roles and responsibilities and most have not had the opportunity to develop the skills that they need to monitor and evaluate standards and teaching. A start has been made on analysing the quality of pupils' work but this does not provide sufficient information to guide future improvement. The school has correctly identified its areas for improvement but not how they can be organised so that they are easily managed. The circumstances of the school have changed significantly since the previous inspection and so direct comparisons are not helpful. However, important first steps have been taken to improve provision, especially in Years 3 to 6, and the capacity for school improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement by ensuring teaching is consistently good and teachers successfully support pupils' understanding of how to improve.
- Develop the role of subject managers so they can effectively lead and monitor their subjects as part of a structured evaluation of the work of the school.
- Improve systems for tracking pupils' standards and progress so that their progress from year to year is clearly identified. Use this information to develop strategies for improvement where pupil progress is too slow. 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

Children enter the Nursery with standards below those expected, especially in their personal, social and emotional skills and language development. They make good progress in their learning because they are well supported and reach broadly average standards at the end of the Reception Year. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. This year there is clear evidence of improving pace of pupils' learning. Progress in Years 3 to 6 was unsatisfactory last year but is now broadly satisfactory. The school's focus on raising standards has sharpened all teachers' assessment skills and they now have higher expectations for the amount of progress pupils of different abilities should make. A good focus has been placed on the progress of more-able pupils but their progress is inconsistent. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Pupils in the early stages of learning English also achieve satisfactorily. Despite this picture of improving achievement, standards in the current Year 6 are still too low, especially in writing and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy learning and want to do well. Relationships are good and pupils behave well. Pupils say that behaviour is much better now because they know what is expected of them and they feel any bullying is quickly dealt with. Attendance is improving and is now broadly average, but a few parents still take holidays in term time beyond accepted levels. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils appreciate other cultures and traditions. They show empathy for one another and respect each other's feelings and beliefs.

In spite of restricted outdoor facilities, pupils participate actively in sport and recreation at break times and after school. They understand the importance of developing healthy lifestyles and have a good understanding of how to keep safe. A strength in personal development is their involvement in the local community through support for charities, fundraising and the elderly. Pupils are given good opportunities to take responsibility, such as participation in the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception Years are good. Teachers are knowledgeable about the curriculum for young children and provide interesting activities that meet their needs. In Years 1 to 6, learning is satisfactory and improving as positive teaching strategies are shared amongst staff. Increasingly, teachers are planning to meet the range of pupils' needs in their class based on a clearer understanding of what pupils already know and understand. The teaching of science, however, is not yet sufficiently effective, especially for the oldest pupils.

There is a good focus on providing challenge for the most able pupils but this is fairly new. Teaching assistants play a positive part in the teaching of different groups but they are not always effectively utilised at the start of lessons. Pupils enjoy learning when they are actively

involved and working in groups to develop projects. Work is regularly marked with an encouraging summary comment, but not all marking gives pupils adequate guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Good planning in the Foundation Stage ensures the education of the youngest children gets off to a successful start. Their learning is promoted well in a wide range of adult-led tasks and child-chosen activities. The curriculum for all pupils supports their personal development well. There are many links with other schools and organisations that extend opportunities for enjoyment and learning. The school has made good progress in developing the curriculum for the eldest pupils in Years 5 and 6 so there is now satisfactory progression of skills from year to year. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those of the more able pupils are satisfactorily met. An appropriate emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, resulting in improving progress throughout the school. Opportunities to develop pupils' computer skills are currently restricted, but this is accounted for in the building development plan. The introduction of French to pupils in Years 3 to 6 is proving successful. As one pupil said, 'Learning is fun because the teacher uses lots of pictures to talk to us in French'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe and secure. They benefit from good support for their personal development and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and behaviour. Support and advice is provided for many children who have personal difficulties and there are many strategies through the school, such as the 'Worry Box', that ensure pupils feel they can ask for help if needed. Significant importance is placed on keeping pupils safe. The school has constructive links with outside agencies who provide support for pupils when required. Procedures to help pupils understand how they are getting on in their work are fairly new. Targets for the next stage in learning in English and mathematics are now given to pupils, but they are not all aware of them and targets are not always sufficiently linked to pupils' current work to make them meaningful. Targets for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities help them to move forward but are not always in small enough steps to help them make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has gone through a period of considerable change that has brought benefits and difficulties. Necessary changes in teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs of older pupils have been put into place and, after a difficult start, are now showing positive impact. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The headteacher is monitoring standards and progress but many procedures are new and have not had time to have made a significant impact. Governors are positively engaged in sharing reviews of the school's improvement plan but much of their energy has been focused on the building developments and less on strategic planning and evaluating school effectiveness. The commitment of all staff and governors to raising standards and improving the academic provision is clear. The groundwork in preparing staff for their involvement in monitoring the school's provision and evaluating its effectiveness has

been successfully completed. They are now ready to develop a more structured programme of review to ensure this positive start continues.

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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	4
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?	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

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?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
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	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

24 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Lyncrest Primary School, Northampton, Northants PP5 5NE

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we thought about your school. We think that your school is presently satisfactory.

What we liked about the school.

- This is an improving school because all the staff are working hard to make the school better and to help you make improved progress.
- Standards you attain in Year 6 are not as high as they should be, but you make satisfactory progress in your work.
- You enjoy school and you behave sensibly and are kind to each other.
- Teaching is satisfactory and teachers are making many of your activities fun.
- You have a good understanding about how to keep healthy and safe.
- You enjoy working together to make the school a better place.
- The staff look after you well and help you feel safe and secure.
- Your headteacher is introducing many new ideas to help teachers understand how well you are getting on and to help you know how to get better at your work.

What we have asked the school to do now.

- Make sure your teachers help you reach higher standards and help you understand what to do to make your work better.
- Check that the teachers who are responsible for the different subjects know how well you are taught and the quality of your work.
- Keep a good check on the progress you make in your work from year to year so any slow progress is spotted and the reasons for the problem are sorted out.

You can help too by making sure you know your targets and continue to work hard.

Thank you again for helping us with our questions.

Hazel Callaghan Lead inspector