



# Lark Hall Community Infant School

Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 124134  
**Local Authority** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 292899  
**Inspection date** 27 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Doris Bell

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>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Clifton Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Tamworth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7		B79 8EF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01827 475720
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	122	<b>Fax number</b>	01827 475720
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Gary Hiron
		<b>Headteacher</b>	J Woolner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

When children start Nursery, their attainment is below that expected for their age in language and number. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to other schools and virtually all pupils come from White British backgrounds. Almost all pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The school has a Healthy Schools Award, a Basic Skills Quality Mark and has achieved Effective Early Learning (EEL) accreditation in the Foundation Stage.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school provides a good quality of education for all of its pupils. Good provision for children in the Foundation Stage results in their good progress. Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in other years because good leadership and management have kept teachers firmly focused on helping all pupils to do as well as they possibly can. Good teaching and learning are effective in meeting the full range of pupils' needs. In the main, teachers know how to get the best from their pupils and overall, challenge them well in lessons. However, challenge is less good when simple worksheets prevent pupils from using their writing skills effectively. All pupils have targets based on their stage of learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know that their targets help them to make progress. However, few realise just how they themselves can use their targets to help them learn even faster. Helping pupils to do this is the next stage identified by the school in its drive to raise achievement further.

Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported in everything they do. The very effective use of nurture groups provides particularly valuable support, helping different groups of pupils to tackle difficulties in their learning. The school's support for its pupils is highly praised by parents, whose views include such comments as 'The school is a happy place whose strength lies in making each child feel valued and special.' This view is shared by the pupils and inspectors agree. Pupils have a strong voice in school affairs. Their personal development and well-being are good and they enjoy learning. They have a well developed understanding of healthy living, gained from the school's preparation for the Healthy Schools Award, of which they are justifiably proud.

A good curriculum and a good range of other activities meet the needs and interests of all pupils well. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are used effectively in all subjects. Curricular planning identifies how subjects can contribute to each other but is not clear enough about how the skills, for example, writing, can be promoted through such links. The school recognises this as an area for improvement. Leadership and management are effective in raising achievement and supporting all pupils. Leaders and managers evaluate the school's work accurately. The school aims to be outstanding and knows what it needs to do to get there. In addition, the good improvement since the last inspection and the strong teamwork evident throughout the school show good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to practise and use their extended writing skills in different subjects and ensure that what they are given to do is always sufficiently challenging for them.
- Show pupils how they themselves can use their targets to improve their learning and how they can work towards their targets in different subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and reach the nationally expected standards in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. The school set challenging targets in 2006. It exceeded them in writing and mathematics and met them in reading. In all three areas, standards are above the national average and all groups of pupils achieve well.

The school has made writing a priority for improvement and met with some success. Nevertheless, more remains to be done because pupils do not readily use their extended writing skills in other subjects and they are not always encouraged to do so. In some subject folders, it was evident pupils were not challenged sufficiently because there were a number of worksheet-type exercises requiring only one word or simple sentence answers when they were capable of more. This leaves pupils little opportunity to use complex or extended sentences, or to write in different styles for different purposes. In contrast, pupils use their ICT skills well in other subjects, including using computers to draft and edit their writing.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils greatly value what the school does for them and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. They work and play happily together, making friends and successfully learning to respect and trust the staff and each other. This good work begins from the moment children start school and learn to appreciate the 'Five Human Values' and follow the 'Golden Rules', both of which are prominently displayed in the school and emphasised during assemblies. Although it has improved this year, pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall, and pupils enjoy their learning. Despite the school's best efforts, a small number of parents still do not ensure their children attend regularly and on time.

Pupils know how to keep safe, and gain a good sense of responsibility through, for example, the work of the school council. They contribute well to the school and wider community, and their efforts are clearly appreciated. The range of opportunities for them to take responsibility or show initiative, however, is relatively limited, although the school is seeking ways to extend it. The pupils' good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and the strong emphasis the school places on turning them into good citizens, prepares them well for their future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers use their good knowledge of their pupils particularly well to provide learning activities that are accurately tailored to their needs in literacy and numeracy. Teachers' planning is built securely on a good understanding of how to get the best from pupils by providing them with good personal and academic guidance. Teachers assess and record pupils' progress well and use the information to set targets and provide activities that, in most lessons, really challenge different groups of pupils to try their best. Occasionally, this does not work as well as intended, as happened in one lesson observed during the inspection, where the activities were confusing for the children and they were unsure of what to do.

A major strength in teaching is the thorough evaluation of the impact of planning on pupils' progress. Through this, teachers identify which pupils need more practice in aspects of their learning and which pupils can move on faster. This good practice is evident in most literacy and numeracy work and some teachers have successfully extended it to other subjects. In their planning, teachers identify clearly the contribution one subject could make to another but they do not identify explicitly which skills will be promoted in doing so. They therefore miss opportunities to plan for and encourage pupils to practise their extended writing skills as much as possible.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage, children benefit from a good range of well planned learning experiences in and out of doors, which they enjoy and which maintains their interest. In the rest of the school, the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes effectively. It provides particularly well for their personal, social and health education, including their safety and well-being. Although links are made between subjects, there is not enough guidance on how a skill in one subject can be used effectively in another. Effective use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in all subjects and the curriculum is enriched and enhanced by a good range of educational visits, visitors and clubs. These include music and sports activities that capture pupils' interest and benefit their learning and personal development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Good systems, including rigorous child protection procedures, support pupils' learning and personal development well, ensuring their health, safety and well-being at all times. Pupils' personal and academic progress is tracked well, enabling staff to act quickly to provide additional support should their progress falter. The nurture groups are particularly successful in this respect. Pupils who attend these groups and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as necessary are all supported effectively

through precise targets and structured learning programmes that help them to make good progress. The school's good links with parents, external agencies and other schools contribute to this work and to the pupils' smooth transition to their junior school. All pupils have learning targets for literacy and numeracy based on the teachers' accurate assessment of their learning. Marking comments indicate what pupils need to learn next and what targets would help them. However, it is difficult for pupils to understand how they can use their targets to improve their learning by themselves, as they have little involvement in setting them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good monitoring and evaluation procedures underpin the effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting pupils. The good direction from the headteacher, who is well supported by senior staff and governors, has set the school's sights very firmly on excellence. Governors fulfil their roles well and the recently appointed assistant headteacher is already influencing the work to improve pupils' progress in writing. The good teamwork is well illustrated in the way that all staff respond to the guidance from senior managers. For example, when work is analysed, there is a focus for teachers on accelerating pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy through the precise setting of targets.

Subject leaders fulfil their roles at least satisfactorily. However, the school recognises that further work is needed to promote writing skills effectively in all subjects, and to involve pupils in evaluating and improving their own work. The well constructed school improvement plan picks up these points and sets a precise agenda for further improvement.

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## 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	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

<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	2

### 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.

## 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	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 us so welcome in your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out how much you like being at school. You and your parents are right in thinking that you go to a good school. Here are some of the good things we found when we came:

- You work hard and make good progress because your teachers teach you well, keep a close check on how you are doing and make sure that you learn something new every day.
- You behave well. You know why it is important to follow your school's 'Golden Rules' and you care for and respect each other and all the adults who help you.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and why it is important to keep fit and healthy.
- The staff do their best to help you when you find something difficult or need to solve any personal problems. This helps you to feel confident about asking for help.
- The headteacher and the governors run the school well and they keep trying to find ways to make it better. You help them with your suggestions.
- Your parents and carers recognise the good work the school does and they work very hard to help it to keep doing this.

We have asked your school to keep up its good work and to help you to do even better by:

- Giving you more opportunities to practise and use your writing skills in different subjects.
- Showing you how you can use your targets to improve your learning by yourselves, and how you can use the work you do in other subjects to reach your targets quicker.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy learning and to be as enthusiastic and caring as you are now, when you grow up.