



Loughton Manor First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131348
Local Authority Milton Keynes
Inspection number 293742
Inspection dates 13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector Sean O'Toole

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Paynes Drive
School category	Community		Loughton
Age range of pupils	3–7		Milton Keynes MK5 8FA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 241472
Number on roll (school)	224	Fax number	01908 242085
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Duggan
		Headteacher	Ms E Bancroft
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school admits pupils from a diverse range and broadly average social backgrounds. Attainment on admission is average although there are weaknesses in some aspects of boys' personal, social and emotional development. Around 10% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. About half of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English and their main home languages are Japanese, Somali and Swahili. A low proportion is entitled to free school meals. Very few have been identified with learning difficulties. Following reorganisation in 2005, the school gained a Nursery and lost the Year 3 classes. It holds the Gold Healthy Schools Award, the Active and Quality Marks and is an Investor in People.

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 and there are several aspects of its work which are outstanding. Parents are full of praise for the school especially in the way it fulfils the mission statement, 'A life-long love of learning and joy from learning together'. One wrote, 'The headteacher is committed to developing well-rounded children'. This success is seen in the pupils' outstanding personal and social qualities and their enthusiasm for learning. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and by the time they leave the school standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Those with learning difficulties make excellent progress and those whose home language is not English also achieve exceptionally well.

Children quickly settle into the Nursery and because of the well organised provision they make good progress. By the end of the Reception year most are working at levels which are in line with those expected for their age. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is also good, especially in reading and writing. Pupils have good basic skills and present their work well using correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and refine these skills in history and geography. Standards are above average in mathematics but teachers' assessments do not consistently identify the next steps in pupils' learning. As a result, the work is not always challenging enough. Nonetheless, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education both academically and socially.

Teaching is good. Lessons are planned well and staff make effective use of the excellent resources to help pupils to understand. The creative curriculum also contributes much to pupils' excitement about learning. Extra activities, and the strong focus on promoting positive attitudes, contribute well to the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. High quality music teaching and opportunities for performance enhance pupils' self esteem and contribute much to their love of school.

The excellent headteacher draws effectively on the diverse talents of the staff, creating a climate in which all are valued. Rigorous monitoring and accurate evaluation of the school's work provide a springboard for developing well considered plans. Issues are tackled robustly and have led to improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) and the successful developments in the Foundation Stage. The school is excellently placed to build on its success. The most successful outcome of leadership and management is the way in which pupils receive outstanding care, support and guidance. All staff clearly believe that every child is special. As a parent said, 'The school takes care to nurture children's emotional and social development'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography.
- Improve teachers' skills in assessing pupils' progress in mathematics in order to set more challenging work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school has a good track record of enabling pupils to attain above average standards. Part of its success lies in the high quality of support for pupils with particular needs, either because of their learning difficulties or their lack of English when they start school. The effective use of initiatives, such as 'Building Learning Power', help pupils to develop thinking skills, be well motivated and cooperative learners and have a positive effect on their achievement.

Good progress starts in the Foundation Stage where children learn successfully and achieve well. They have secure skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and good personal, social and emotional skills. Achievement throughout the school is good. Pupils' reading and writing skills are in advance of those expected for their age. However, they do not apply their writing skills sufficiently in subjects such as history and geography. Pupils are good at arithmetic and are knowledgeable about shape, space and measures. Nonetheless, some of the work set is not as challenging as it should be and more able pupils should do even better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Parents are highly appreciative of this aspect of the school's work. As one wrote, 'My daughter has gone from being a very quiet child to one with confidence and opinions'. Pupils are excited about learning. Their relationships with each other and their teachers are outstanding. They take much pleasure in learning about each other's cultures, languages and traditions. Year 2 pupils have been inspired by their study of the Great Fire of London, carrying out research and enthusiastically sharing their knowledge. Music plays a significant part in pupils' enjoyment of school and they are justifiably proud of their public performances. Although most pupils behave very well, there are a few who become unsettled if they are not fully engaged in the lesson. Pupils know that it is important to follow the school rules because that keeps them safe and to tell someone if they are unhappy. The school council is very keen to make sure lunch boxes are healthy and meet with parents from time to time to express these views. Pupils understand the benefits of regular exercise and delight in the opportunities for physical education and dance. Pupils work and play effectively together. They are extremely good at teamwork and persevere for long periods in improving their skills such as singing and dance. They listen maturely to each other's views and their ability to communicate clearly helps them to contribute much to school life and to prepare them well for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

One parent said, 'Supportive and well-targeted teaching helps the children to develop confidence and make good progress'. Good teaching throughout the school contributes to effective learning. In the Foundation Stage there is a good balance of child-chosen and adult-led activities and children thrive on the variety of opportunities to learn through play. The teachers' expertise in developing basic skills leads to pupils' success in reading and writing. There is effective teaching of letter sounds and opportunities for discussion and role play contribute to a growing enjoyment of language. Pupils also enjoy mathematics although several pupils feel that the work is too easy. This is because teachers do not always take sufficient account of what pupils already know when planning lessons. As a result, work is sometimes not pitched at the right level.

Teachers are skilful in using interactive whiteboards to enthuse the pupils. Support staff contribute very well to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English. They ask well focused questions and make effective use of resources to bring learning to life. All pupils are responsive and enjoy opportunities to share ideas and work together. They work hard, maintain good concentration and take care to present their work well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is enriched excellently through creative and imaginative activities and visits which enhance learning. Underpinning the school's provision is the focus on meeting individual's personal, social and emotional needs. There are excellent initiatives to develop confidence and, as a result, pupils show much maturity in working together and in valuing everyone's contribution. Planning is thorough and ensures that all pupils have relevant and meaningful opportunities to learn. Creativity is fostered through the excellent music programme and opportunities for dramatic performances. Because basic skills feature strongly pupils are prepared well for the future. The school is developing links across subjects although more remains to be done to provide opportunities for pupils to write imaginatively and in detail in subjects such as history and geography. Substantial improvement, led by the deputy headteacher, has been made in the provision for ICT since the previous inspection and pupils now have good skills which they apply well across a range of subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

'The staff cherish each child as though they were their own,' wrote a delighted parent. Excellent care, support and guidance lie at the heart of the school's work and promote effective learning. There are well established systems to ensure the safety and well-being of all. Rigorous checks on the suitability and qualifications of staff, risk

assessments and attention to detail in matters of child protection ensure that children are safe and happy. Right from the Foundation Stage staff keep good records of the children's progress and use the information to plan well focused work to ensure that all groups make at least good progress. Helpful marking encourages the pupils to do better and, in some cases, includes well focused guidance linked to targets. This is most effective in English. An excellent initiative has been to provide Year 1 pupils with opportunities to revisit activities in the Foundation Stage. This contributes excellently to the way that pupils' develop confidence and a sense of security.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management under the inspiring direction of the headteacher have resulted in good quality education and high standards of care. Staff work together well and all use their skills to contribute to pupils' learning. Excellent monitoring and support by the headteacher and deputy have resulted in a climate where improvement is the norm and where new ideas, when they are seen to be of benefit to the pupils, are welcomed. Middle managers are effective and keen to extend their influence through developing pupils' writing in other subjects and setting more challenging work in mathematics.

Staff take good account of parents' and pupils' views. They work hard to improve their own expertise through training and they respond to the well focused monitoring of their work by senior staff. The school's strategic plans correctly include any areas for development and progress in achieving goals is checked carefully. The school also makes excellent use of resources to support learning and organises staff in such a way that they have maximum effect in supporting those with learning difficulties. Recent successes have included the development of the Foundation Stage and the provision of the after-school club. Governors play their part exceptionally well. They have an excellent understanding of the school's work, are good at checking on its progress, are forward thinking and regularly challenge the senior staff about their decisions and plans.

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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?	1
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	1
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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	1

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	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 helping us when we came to visit your school and for making our visit so pleasant. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your interesting work. You taught us a lot about the Great Fire of London. The way you played instruments, sang about the roundabouts in Milton Keynes and danced were super. We were very pleased that you all seem to love coming to school and get on so well together.

We think that your school is good and some parts of its work are outstanding. You all work hard and are good at reading, writing and mathematics. Those of you who have recently come to England do very well and quickly learn to speak English. Everyone seems friendly and this helps even those who sometimes find learning hard to do well. Your teachers work hard and make lessons fun. We know that you like writing and we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to write in your history and geography lessons. You are very good at listening to your teachers and they give you good advice about how to do your work. We have asked them to make sure that your work in mathematics is hard enough for all of you. You can help by always doing your best.

Everyone working in the school really cares about you and many of you told us that you feel safe and happy. You appreciate all of the exciting things the headteacher and teachers do with you and really enjoy singing and art. You put lots of effort into your physical education lessons and know how to keep fit and healthy by eating well. We were impressed by how much you know about fruit and vegetables and how well the school council have helped you and your parents to make good choices about what to have in your lunch boxes.

Mrs Willman and I wish you every success in the future and hope that you will always enjoy school as much as you do now.

Sean O'Toole

Lead inspector