



Liden Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131901
Local Authority Swindon
Inspection number 293880
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector Mo Roberts HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Liden Drive
School category	Community		Swindon
Age range of pupils	4–11		SN3 6EX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01793 531025
Number on roll (school)	337	Fax number	01793 512487
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Trevor Durrant
		Headteacher	Paul Kohn
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. The roll changes throughout the year, with more pupils than expected leaving or joining the school. This is partly due to changes in the staffing at the local hospital. Pupils come from a wide range of economic backgrounds, although the majority are from owner-occupier accommodation. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average, as is the number eligible for free school meals. The school has moved into a new building since the last inspection and shares a site with a special school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Liden is an improving school that provides a satisfactory standard of education, with many good features. The school has worked successfully to tackle the weaknesses that had become evident in recent years. As a result, standards are rising and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage mean that children settle well, although achievement in language and emotional development, for a minority of children, is slightly below the level usually found on entry to school. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. Improvements to teaching and the monitoring of pupils' progress mean that most underachievement is tackled successfully. The senior leadership team has worked effectively with the staff to ensure all teaching is at least satisfactory and they have helped increase the proportion of good lessons. This means that the rate of progress made by pupils is accelerating. The school recognises that more remains to be done to ensure that standards continue to rise, particularly for some boys and a few more-able pupils. Older pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own performance. This justifiably increases their pride in what they can do, and raises their expectations of what they can ultimately achieve. Improvements in the way the school checks on pupils' progress and adjusts teaching have helped to raise standards so they were broadly in line with national expectations in both key stages in 2006.

Pupils respond well to teachers' higher expectations. Their personal development and well-being are satisfactory; they concentrate in lessons and behave well. The school is calm and lessons are purposeful and productive. Pupils enjoy their time in school and benefit from a sound curriculum, but it does not yet appeal more to those who enjoy active learning. Pupils are guided well and they know how they are doing in their school work. The headteacher has a strong strategic view of school development and his school evaluation is generally accurate. The recent rise in standards demonstrates a good capacity to secure further improvement. The governing body supports the school well but still has vacancies for two parent governors. The school is currently conducting a survey to seek parents' views. This is aimed at discovering how to further develop all parents' involvement in supporting pupils' learning and development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum to ensure it fully motivates and enthuses all pupils and enables boys in particular to reach their full potential.
- Continue to raise expectations for able pupils throughout the school.
- Increase all parents' and carers' involvement in supporting the school's drive to raise standards and enrich children's learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. When children start in the Reception class their skills are mostly as expected for their age, although boys' emotional development is at a lower level than that of girls. Through their time in Reception and Key Stage 1 the pupils' independence and confidence improve and they make good progress in most areas from their varied starting points. This steady start is built on effectively. Standards are beginning to rise in Key Stages 1 and 2. Last year's results showed pupils made significantly better progress than in previous years, with science results being above national expectations. However, the challenge for more-able pupils in all subjects is not consistent. The targets for mathematics were missed last year but the school has begun to address the weakness in calculation skills in the current year groups.

There is a discrepancy in standards between boys and girls in Key Stage 2. Girls exceeded national averages overall in 2006 but boys did less well. There are no significant differences in achievement of pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds in the school as a whole. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve at least as well as their peers and in some cases make more- than-expected progress towards the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The good relationships between pupils, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that learners like coming to school. They enjoy learning, especially when they are able to take an active part in lessons. Attendance has improved each year for the last four years, but there is still a high level of authorised absence, which slows the progress made by some learners. Pupils behave well. Older pupils take on monitoring responsibilities at lunch times. School dinners provide children with a well-balanced meal, with fruit and salad available every day, but a large number of children bring packed lunches. These do not always reinforce the healthy-eating message the school is actively promoting. All classes are timetabled to take part in two hours of physical education and sport each week, although some teachers make more use of these opportunities than others. The school encourages pupils to be active at lunch times. Extra-curricular activities are increasingly popular. The school council meets regularly and suggests ways in which the school can be improved but pupils feel its impact is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is now consistently at least satisfactory and in many instances is good. Some outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. This ensures that almost all pupils make at least adequate progress. There are many examples showing pupils' learning making rapid gains in the last 18 months. Younger children are given ample opportunities to learn through play and to make some independent decisions. In lessons throughout the school teachers explain the purpose of activities clearly. Management of pupils and activities is effective. Pupils respect what teachers say and they are also developing their ability to listen to one another. However, teaching methods do not always fully engage those who are not good at sitting and listening for extended periods. The best teaching is briskly paced and exploits modern technology to reinforce points and to enliven learning. Boys as well as girls respond positively in this situation and show a keen interest in developing their technical skills in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities often progress well because their work is set at the correct level and their targets are explained to them in a child-friendly way. There are too few examples of targets being rapidly adapted so that the most able learners progress at their maximum speed. Otherwise, targets are well used to focus learners on what needs to be accomplished.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum, including the indoor and outdoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage, is satisfactory. Modifications have contributed to raising standards in English, maths and science. As yet there are still too few elements which are exciting and involve active learning, although the recent cross-curricular focus on a 'circus picture' generated some good work. Pupils are eager to achieve even more when well stimulated in work like this. The Year 6 residential visit adds another dimension to pupils' learning. It challenges pupils to take part in new activities and develops their independence. There are relatively few visits and visitors to the school who can enrich the curriculum and make learning meaningful and memorable. Curriculum planning does identify links between different subjects. In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, lessons are successfully based on themes. The older children are mostly taught subjects separately, with only a few links made to other areas. There is a good range of clubs, which are becoming more popular. These help children to develop new creative and physical skills. The school is enthusiastically adopting the teaching of French across the age groups and using its secondary links to assist in this development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall. Pupils like coming to school because the teachers and support staff know them well and relationships are good. They feel safe and well cared for and know who to turn to for help. There are rigorous systems in place to track the progress being made by pupils; this helps the teachers to identify those who need extra help and support. Teachers' marking tells learners what they need to do to improve their work, but it is not yet fully consistent and informative in all classes. The guidance and support for more-able pupils are satisfactory; however, the school needs to further increase the challenge to these learners to ensure they all achieve to their potential. Support is particularly effective for children who have additional needs. Individual education plans are exemplary; they are written in language that pupils can understand and that makes it clear what the learners and their teachers need to do in order to reach the targets. Pupils are involved in reviewing the plans and staff make good use of specialist advice from outside school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some key strengths. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and are well supported by those who lead Key Stages 1 and 2. Together this leadership team has been instrumental in successfully driving the school's recent improvement. They have guided and enthused staff so that there is a shared commitment to raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Areas of weakness, including the underachievement identified in the last inspection, are being dealt with robustly. A close check is kept on teaching and learning and assessment data is analysed carefully. Governors understand their strategic role and are developing their ability to challenge the senior leaders and hold them to account. The 'Intensifying Support Programme' is being used well and includes both the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of appropriate targets. This has raised teachers' awareness of the pupils' capabilities. School leaders have an increasingly clear idea of how well pupils are doing and who would benefit from extra help, but have not yet done enough to extend the curriculum and develop more challenge for the most able. There is a good example of involving parents in pupils' learning in Year 1 but this is not sufficiently widespread across the school to ensure all pupils' self-esteem is raised as a result of parents' and carers' involvement. Leaders are not complacent and they recognise that there is still more to be done to consolidate the progress and to continue to secure the necessary improvements so that every pupil reaches their maximum potential.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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	2
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	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	3
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?	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?	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	2
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	2
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

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we recently inspected your school. I was pleased with the way you all help each other and know the school rules and are kind and helpful. We really enjoyed talking to you about the things you do in school.

You go to an improving school which gives you a satisfactory education. You each get help at the level that you need and it was pleasing to see almost everyone trying hard in their lessons. You are also doing better in your national tests now. The school is a safe and well-organised place. You learn about keeping healthy and being safe. The school dinners are good. I am pleased you are keen to be on the school council and to help decide what you think would help the school be even better.

I have asked your teachers to improve these three things:

- to organise the work you do so that it includes some more exciting activities, like the work you did on the circus picture, where you can be very actively involved – especially the boys
- to ask those of you who learn easily to do even more and to keep your targets challenging!
- to ask all your parents and carers to further support the school, so that you do even better with your reading, writing and mathematics because you can talk about your school work at home as they will know more about what you are doing.

What you do at school is important for your future so please make sure you keep doing your best to help your teachers to help you.