



Lodge Farm Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132091
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 293942
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector John Paull

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mobbsbury way
School category	Community		Chells
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stevenage SG2 0HR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01438 236600
Number on roll (school)	463	Fax number	01438 236601
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Helena Williams
		Headteacher	Mr Colin Tapscott
Date of previous school inspection	28 October 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007	Inspection number 293942
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lodge Farm is larger than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils have a White British heritage. A small proportion comes from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils who qualify for a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is around average.

The school has achieved the Basic Skills quality mark, the Hertfordshire Chartermark for the Foundation Stage, the Investors in People award and its football team has won the English Schools' Football Association Sainsbury's under-11 Cup, a national competition.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lodge Farm Primary is a good school, which matches its own evaluation. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has produced strong leadership teams at senior and middle levels of management, resulting in good leadership and management overall. These teams check thoroughly and regularly the quality of teaching, the curriculum and how well pupils are learning. Good teaching and learning result, so progress is good and is monitored constantly to ensure that all pupils gain the knowledge and skills that they should. Whenever a difficulty is uncovered, effective action is taken promptly to rectify it. This happens through the school as a whole and for individual pupils. As a direct result, pupils' achievement is good and, by the time they leave in Year 6, standards are above average. Standards in mathematics are not quite as high as in other subjects, largely because not as many achieve at a level above that normally expected. A key factor is that marking in mathematics is also not as good as in other subjects. It does not consistently diagnose weaknesses or inform pupils about how to improve.

Currently, when children first enter the Nursery, overall attainment is below that normally found, although it ranges widely. Outstanding provision in the Nursery and Reception, strengthened by the exciting outdoor area, means that children make a flying start. Many of them reach nationally expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. This represents outstanding progress. Good progress is then maintained during Years 1 and 2. National assessments confirm good achievement at this stage. In 2006, Year 2 results were better than in previous years and indicated above average standards. A strong curriculum and effective care, guidance and support for pupils underpin this good picture. What is taught is presented in interesting ways that are meaningful to pupils, so they concentrate effectively, behave well and acquire knowledge and skills securely. This includes pupils of all abilities, including those with gifts and talents. The few pupils with English as an additional language make rapid progress owing to the school's caring ethos.

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. They co-operate with each other well. They contribute to the school community in many ways, such as in the playground, sorting lost property, and getting milk and fruit ready at break times. They understand the importance of keeping safe and healthy. Their good literacy, numeracy and social skills mean that they are well prepared for life outside school. Cultural development is good overall and pupils have good attitudes towards those from cultures other than their own. However, their understanding of Britain as an ethnically diverse and multicultural society is limited. Parents' questionnaires indicate overwhelming support for what the school provides. Typically, a parent wrote, 'Lodge Farm excels. I and my children are really happy!' The school's track record and good self-evaluation indicate a strong capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve marking, especially in mathematics, so pupils can understand better how to improve.
- Implement ways of helping pupils to understand the ethnic and cultural richness of modern Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards are above average. This is reflected in the results of Year 6 national assessments. For the past few years, these have been above average in English, mathematics and science and, in 2006, they rose a little compared with the previous two years. Challenging targets, agreed with the local authority, are nearly always met. Starting points on entry to the Nursery vary considerably within each year group, ranging from very low to above average. Currently, the level on entry is below average overall. Owing to excellence of provision in the Nursery and Reception classes, by the time children enter Year 1, a very high proportion attain the expected goals for their age. This represents outstanding achievement. This flying start is consolidated effectively in Years 1 and 2. Good progress results in good standards. Results of 2006 assessments at the end of Year 2 were above average. Pupils of all abilities achieve well, including gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Those few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. A typical parent's comment expressed pleasure with the school's '...really friendly, happy and open approach'. Many pupils enjoy extra responsibilities, acting as 'Brain Buddies' or school councillors, carrying out such roles to good effect. Pupils behave well and demonstrate a desire to care for one another. They clearly value belonging to such a secure community and enjoy their contributions to the school and to the world outside. They learn effectively about their own and other cultures, through art, design and technology, dance, music and religious traditions. The link with a Zimbabwean school is a particularly good feature. However, they have a limited appreciation that Britain itself is a rich multicultural nation. Pupils take on safe and healthy lifestyles well. They know about the importance of a healthy diet. Whilst they play vigorously at break and lunchtime, they also have a care for others who are involved in quieter activities. Above average attendance is an indicator of how pupils enjoy school, as is the enthusiastic way that they talk about teachers making lessons interesting for them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, including outstanding teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers plan very effectively. They fully use information about how well pupils are progressing to ensure that all of them work at the correct level. Typically, lessons are pacy and interesting. Pupils themselves say that they enjoy their teachers' practical methods, especially in science, art and history. Marking is carried out conscientiously and tells pupils how they are getting on. However, it does not consistently explain to pupils what needs to be done next to improve their work. This is especially the case in mathematics. Teaching assistants are kept fully informed about how to support pupils effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit especially from their help. All this good provision ensures that learning throughout the school is secure and leads to good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The needs of all pupils, including the more able and those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are fully met because planning is very detailed. Learning is often presented using themes that link knowledge and skills from several subjects. Literacy and numeracy are correctly given prominence. The curriculum is brought alive for pupils by the use of real situations in the local environment. For example, the local bakers are the focus of one investigation that enables pupils to acquire ideas about the world beyond school, and then to experiment with baking in school. However, it does not provide sufficient opportunities where pupils can learn about cultural diversity in the United Kingdom. The curriculum is outstanding in the Nursery and Reception classes. These vibrant areas are a treasure trove of equipment, offering learning experiences that develop skills exceptionally well in all areas of children's learning. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school recognises the need to broaden the range of its after school clubs, although good links with local sports providers offer a good variety of opportunities to enhance provision in physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils' safety is paramount and child protection and safeguarding procedures are secure. Pupils know they can confide in a trusted adult. The school provides well for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. It works well with outside agencies and other organisations, such as 'Bridge Builders', supporting individuals, families and the community very effectively. The school's philosophy of playing to pupils' strengths helps ensure that they are keen to contribute to its smooth running and the welfare of others. Formal arrangements for academic

care are good, although some aspects of marking are restricted in mathematics. Nevertheless, challenging targets are set and careful tracking of pupils' progress ensures that they are met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an exceptionally good leader, who empowers and inspires staff and pupils to contribute effectively to the direction and management of the school. His leadership ensures a common sense of purpose throughout the school. Detailed planning, focusing on strengthening the performance in key areas is backed up by rigorous monitoring. This enables the school to move forward continuously. The headteacher is well supported by his strong senior management team and good middle managers. The capacity to improve is therefore good. Governors show strong commitment to the school and increasing effectiveness in challenging its work. Standards have risen since the last inspection and good value for money is being achieved.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	1
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

8 March 2007

Dear Children

Lodge Farm Primary School, Mobbsbury Way, Chells, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG2 0HP

Thank you for being so polite and helpful when Mrs Blakelock, Mr Deane-Hall and I visited your school. Your willingness to speak to us and tell us so many things about how you are getting on at school helped the two days to go smoothly. It is great that so many of you told us that you like school and that your teachers teach well and look after you while you are there. We all agree with you about these things.

We enjoyed talking to the school councillors. We agree with them that your school is good and that your work is of good quality.

Here are some more good things about your school

- You behave well and are kind to each other.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants make sure that you learn effectively, so you make good progress. What they teach you is interesting.
- It is good that your parents support the school so well.
- Your headteacher has excellent ideas to improve your school and all the other adult leaders do a good job in helping him.

Here are some things that we think your headteacher and teachers can do to help you even more

- Improve the way that they mark your maths, so you will know how to understand it better.
- Show you just how rich our country is with people of different cultures, lifestyles and backgrounds.

We hope that you will get on very well in the future and that you will always be proud of your school.

Yours sincerely,

John William Paull

Lead Inspector