



# Lethbridge Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 132193  
**Local Authority** Swindon  
**Inspection number** 293976  
**Inspection dates** 6–7 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Shirley Billington

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Lethbridge Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Swindon
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		SN1 4BY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 535033
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	487	<b>Fax number</b>	01793 616374
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Jokie Bakker
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ray Norman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a very large primary school where the majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A range of minority ethnic groups is also represented. A very small number of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English, most of whom have recently joined the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. There have been several changes of staff over the past year and a new senior leadership team was established in September 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and has some good features. Children in the Reception Year make a sound start to their learning. Their personal and social skills are effectively nurtured so that they develop positive attitudes to learning. This is built on effectively in Years 1 to 6 and, as a result, pupils' personal development is good throughout the school. Pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy a variety of clubs and opportunities to participate in sporting and musical activities. Year 6 pupils are mature and responsible and well prepared for the next stage in their education. There are good arrangements for the care, guidance and support for pupils. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from well-targeted support and make good progress in relation to their individual targets.

For other pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, progress is more erratic. Although achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are above average at the end of Year 6, there is some variation in how well pupils do in different subjects. The school has recognised this and put in place good systems to track and analyse progress and to take rapid action when pupils are falling behind. For instance, action to boost the progress of average attaining girls, who were not doing as well as they should have done in mathematics, is proving successful. However, there is still work to do, particularly to boost achievement in English, where reading skills are strong but writing is a weaker area.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new leadership team is beginning to have a positive impact, for example, in improving aspects of teaching and, in particular, raising expectations of what pupils should achieve. Much of this is at an early stage but is successfully moving the school in the right direction. As a result, teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Elements of good practice are beginning to be shared to raise the quality of provision further. This has improved the way that lessons are planned to meet the range of pupils' needs. However, there are still areas for improvement, particularly in the way that time is used. The timetable is not organised to make the best use of prime learning time. Lessons sometimes lack pace and expectations of what pupils might achieve in the time available are not always sufficiently high.

A range of systems is in place to check on the school's strengths and weaknesses and to plan for improvements. However, these are not always sufficiently focused on how standards and achievement will be improved and therefore the success of initiatives is difficult to measure. Recent successes in tackling some underachievement and improving the quality of provision demonstrate that the school has sound capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in writing, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Review the way that time is used to maximise time for learning and to introduce more pace and urgency to lessons.

- Ensure that planning for school improvement is clearly focused on improving standards and achievement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Children starting Reception generally have a good base of skills and make steady progress to achieve better than expected levels at the start of Year 1. This is successfully built on in Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2 standards are consistently above average. Standards are generally higher in reading and mathematics than in writing.

Until recently, progress in Years 3 to 6 has been erratic. A significant proportion of pupils have not achieved as well as they should have done by the end of Year 6. The school has begun to address this through systematic tracking of pupils' progress to identify where there is a need to boost achievement. This is beginning to have an impact and most pupils are making steady gains in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 although there is some variation in how well pupils do in different subjects. A significant proportion of average attaining girls have been underachieving in mathematics, but adaptations to teaching and work in small groups are boosting their progress. In English, skills in reading are particularly good but there is room for improvement in pupils' skills in writing.

The pupils that make the best gains are those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Well-targeted support ensures that their needs are met effectively and they make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well behaved and have good attitudes to learning. They work well in lessons and apply themselves well when they work together in pairs or small groups. Year 6 pupils take their responsibilities seriously, for example as peer mediators or when they look after younger children at lunchtime. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. The school council makes a good contribution in bringing forward ideas to improve the school. Through the school council, pupils identify the charities that they will support and organise fund-raising events. Pupils are involved in a good variety of activities in the local community, for example the Old Town Festival. Council members have recently been instrumental in drawing up an anti-bullying charter. 'We've sorted out bullying' a council member declared confidently. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and particularly strong in the social and moral elements. The school has recognised the need to extend provision to promote pupils' spiritual awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures represented in modern Britain.

Pupils' good basic skills and good learning habits mean that they are well prepared for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Weaknesses in teaching that were resulting in underachievement have been successfully tackled so that there is now more consistency in the quality through the school. Planning has been improved so that better account is taken of the range of abilities in a class or teaching group. Lessons are generally purposeful, although at times pupils are not given a clear view of what they need to achieve and the pace of learning in some lessons is not as rapid as it might be. Relationships are good and pupils are keen and eager to learn. Given their levels of motivation and good skills in working together, there is scope to involve pupils more in making decisions about how they will tackle tasks. Use of assessment information to set targets for pupils has been helpful to some extent in raising expectations, although these are still not high enough, particularly in writing in Years 3 to 6. Marking of pupils' work is generally good, with helpful, evaluative comments that tell them how well they have succeeded in a task.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is being successfully developed and adapted to strengthen links across subjects. In the Reception Year, a good variety of practical activities enables children to explore and investigate new ideas, working together in small groups. In Years 1 to 6, all subjects are planned and taught, but the way that the timetable is organised means that time is not always used effectively. The morning is used predominantly for English and mathematics and some of these lessons are too long. Opportunities are being missed to introduce a more balanced range of activities. Not enough time is given for pupils to engage in extended writing or to write for a range of purposes across the curriculum. There is sound provision to extend pupils' learning experiences through visits, visitors and extra activities such as clubs and performances. A well-planned programme for personal, social and health education contributes effectively to pupils' personal development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good attention is paid to supporting individual pupils who need some extra care and attention. Several parents expressed appreciation of the school's response to any concerns. One commented, 'We are extremely impressed by how the school has dealt with this and are working with us to resolve the problem.' For pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, detailed plans include clear targets for improvement and there are good systems for supporting and checking that pupils are making good

progress. Pupils in the early stages of learning English are well supported so that they can benefit from all that the school offers. The implementation of whole-school tracking systems is proving successful in identifying individuals and groups of pupils in Years 3 to 6 who are not making the progress that they should. This leads to rapid intervention to give these pupils an extra boost and is proving very successful in helping them to quickly make up lost ground. The information from the tracking systems is also used to set targets at different levels. Pupils are given individual targets, but there is some inconsistency in the quality of these. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The new leadership team has taken appropriate action to tackle underachievement, which is proving effective. This is evident in the way that extra support has successfully accelerated girls' progress in mathematics in Years 4 and 5. While the school recognises that there is scope for further improvement, planning for this is not sufficiently focused on raising achievement. Teaching is being monitored regularly and helpful feedback is given to teachers so that there is more consistency in the quality. However, there is scope to make better use of the information from a range of monitoring activities to target the improvements needed in teaching to enable better achievement. The school improvement plan covers a wide range of activities but lacks a sharp focus on the intended impact on standards. Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses and have an effective structure to plan and support improvements. Governors have been instrumental in allocating additional resources to strengthen the school's leadership, improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement.

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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>	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	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	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	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<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>	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	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**

You might remember that I visited recently with two other inspectors to see how you were getting on. Thank you to all of you who gave us so much information about your various activities at school. I thought you might be interested in what we found out. Your school provides you with a sound education and does some things particularly well.

Here are some of the 'highlights'.

- You behave well, are keen to learn and those of you in Year 6 are well prepared for secondary school and later life.
- The school takes good care of you, especially if you need some extra help.
- Those in charge of the school are working hard to make it an even better place to learn.
- Your school council represents you well and puts forward good ideas to improve the school. We were impressed with your anti-bullying charter!

This is what we have suggested needs to be done now.

- Boost your skills in writing so that these are as good as those in reading.
- Make sure that time is used well so that you do more than English and mathematics each morning and your lessons move your learning on as quickly as possible.
- Make sure that all the plans for making the school a better place really concentrate on how your learning should be improved.

Thank you again for your help.