



Lindens Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104212
Local Authority Walsall
Inspection number 294504
Inspection dates 12–13 October 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Hodgkinson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hundred Acre Road
School category	Community		Streetly
Age range of pupils	3–11		Sutton Coldfield B74 2BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3539273
Number on roll (school)	301	Fax number	0121 3538696
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Tony Beeson
		Headteacher	Simon Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2005		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	12–13 October 2006	294504

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves a residential area on the northern edge of Birmingham, where social and economic circumstances are relatively favourable. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a little below average. In September 2005, the school opened a resource base which currently supports six physically disabled pupils to become fully included in the life of the school. The school has also opened an outreach service, which offers services for physically disabled pupils throughout the borough.

When the school was last inspected in September 2005, it was given a Notice to Improve. It was judged to require significant improvement in relation to pupils' achievement, teachers' use of assessment information, and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement. Its effectiveness is satisfactory. Good leadership and management, driven by the energy and vision of the headteacher, have given the school a very clear focus on raising standards and achievement. As a result, good progress has been made in rectifying the main weaknesses highlighted at the last inspection. Teachers now set clear individual targets to support pupils' progress which pupils understand and use to assess their own performance. These targets have raised the expectations of both pupils and teachers of the standards pupils should be reaching. As a consequence, standards in mathematics have risen significantly across the school, and are now above average by the end of Year 6. Standards in boys' writing have also improved strongly, and their Year 6 test results in English were well above average. Overall, standards are above average.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in all years have made very good recent progress in English and mathematics, and those currently in Years 5 and 6 are adequately making up the ground lost through underachievement in their earlier years at the school. However, partly because of the recent strong focus on mathematics and English, standards have fallen in science, and are now broadly average. In other subjects teachers' planning is not as sharply linked to expected standards as it is in mathematics and English. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but opportunities are not always taken to make links between subjects to help pupils apply and further develop their literacy, numeracy and other skills.

In the words of one pupil, Lindens is a 'happy, joyful and colourful school'. It offers a warm and welcoming environment, richly decorated by outstanding displays of works of art which celebrate cultures both across the world and through time. In such surroundings, pupils of all ages enjoy school and children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), where they experience a good balance of guided and independent activities.

The school gives good care, guidance and support to individual pupils, which is based on careful tracking of their progress and well targeted in and out of class support. In particular, there has been highly effective integration of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, who make good progress in the school. The school's caring ethos encourages pupils' relationships with others to develop very strongly. Their personal development and well-being are good. They develop a particularly strong awareness of how to live and eat healthily. Pupils' positive behaviour in class and around the school supports their learning well. Satisfactory teaching has secured necessary improvements in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, although in lessons, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to solve problems independently or by working in teams.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science.

- Plan more effective links between subjects to help pupils apply and further develop their literacy, numeracy and other skills.
- Foster pupils' skills of independence, problem solving and teamworking in class activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Following the last inspection, action taken by the school to raise standards has helped pupils make strong progress in mathematics and English. Across Years 3 to 6 in these subjects, many pupils have made recent progress at twice the nationally expected rate. As a consequence, standards are above average. Year 6 national test results have generally returned to the level expected for pupils who leave the Foundation Stage with above average standards and who also reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Achievement is satisfactory overall because pupils are having to make up for lost ground in previous years. Standards in science have declined over the last two years, and are now broadly average. The school has rightly identified raising standards in science as a main priority for improvement.

Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage, having joined the Nursery with standards which are broadly in line with those expected for their their age. In Years 1 and 2, pupils build steadily on the gains made in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a happy and harmonious community. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly revealed in their enthusiastic participation in whole-school assemblies. It leads them to take a sensitive approach to life and everyday issues. The school offers a rich celebration of cultural diversity through its activities and displays, and as a result, pupils show a good awareness of the diversity of cultures within modern Britain. Behaviour throughout the school is good and children enjoy school life. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. While attendance rates are below average, they are affected by long-term absence through illness of some pupils.

Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. In class, pupils show better than average literacy and numeracy skills, but other skills like initiative, team working and independent problem solving', important for later life, are not as well developed.

Pupils have an exceptional understanding of the need to live healthy lifestyles, with many making highly informed healthy choices at lunch time. They participate enthusiastically in the physical activities offered by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress, and their use of this assessment information to help them to plan effective lessons, have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. In mathematics and English, very precise targets are set to guide individual pupils to help them to do well. Most pupils are able to assess themselves against their targets, and can thereby identify exactly what they need to do to improve. Teachers' marking of pupils' writing is often of high quality because it identifies precisely how well pupils are doing with respect to their targets and how to make their work better. Such good practice has yet to fully extend to subjects beyond mathematics and English, and in these other subjects, teachers' expectations are not as high. In the Foundation Stage, activities in lessons are well planned and children respond well to some challenging tasks.

Teachers and teaching assistants in all years organise children carefully into groups so that work is well linked to pupils' capabilities. They make full use of the many rooms and spaces available to create stimulating environments for learning. However, in what are sometimes highly structured lessons, pupils are too dependent on adults for support and are not able to find ways of solving problems independently. This is a factor preventing their learning from being better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. In the Foundation Stage, children are offered a well balanced range of activities in an exciting environment, which helps them to make good progress in all areas of their learning. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is broad and meets statutory requirements. However, the emphasis over the last year on raising standards in mathematics and English has limited planning for improvement in other areas, including in science. There are nonetheless significant strengths in the art curriculum and this is reflected in the high quality displays around the school. The school is developing links between literacy, numeracy and other subjects, but acknowledges that this is not yet consistent across subjects and classes. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and sports is available to pupils of all ages, the latter supported by close links with the nearby specialist sports college. The curriculum is further well enriched by a number of visits from artists, performers and speakers, plus a good range of trips out of school, including residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are highly appreciative of the good care and support given to pupils by all staff, which helps children feel safe and secure. Teachers have established systems which monitor the progress of individual pupils carefully and which allows them to

intervene swiftly where pupils are in danger of underachieving. The monitoring of the performance of particular groups of pupils by attainment and ethnicity is not yet systematic enough to inform planning for those groups, though. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are confident and enjoy school. They are very well supported when taught in class or when withdrawn for specialist support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Considerable improvements to the environment and ethos of the school are widely attributed by parents and governors to the vision and leadership of the headteacher. Furthermore, since the last inspection, the headteacher has created a powerful unity of purpose among the staff to improve in those areas identified as weaknesses. As a result, the school has made good progress in those areas. Self-evaluation, including monitoring of the impact of measures put in place to raise standards, is thorough and rigorous. It has been well supported by agencies of the local authority. Governors have been fully involved in the drive for improvement and their capacity to hold the school to account has improved considerably. Throughout the school, there is now a good capacity to maintain the rate of improvement. Teams of teachers work well in planning together to raise the quality of provision. Staff with responsibilities for managing subjects play a leading role in these teams and keep a careful check on the impact of the programmes to support achievement by monitoring performance data and pupils' work. They have, however, yet to play a full enough role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	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	1
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	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?	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	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

Thank you so much for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited the school for its recent inspection. You are clearly proud to attend a school which one of the pupils described as 'happy, colourful and joyful'. We were very impressed by the beautiful displays of your work and that of others around the school which celebrate so many cultures. The teachers make good use of the rooms in which you work to create the right atmosphere in which you can learn. It is clear that you get on well with each other because you really understand each others' needs and feelings. The school takes good care of you, and you take good care of each other. You also look after yourselves very well, too. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of eating a healthy diet and taking part in lots of physical exercise.

Since inspectors last visited a year ago, many of you have made strong progress in mathematics and English. Teachers are now setting you very clear targets for improvement in these subjects. It is good to see that many of you are able to check your own work to see if it reaches the targets you have been set. Through this and through helpful comments from your teachers, you are able to see how you can improve. The good leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has been very strongly focused on improving standards of your work, and you can help in that by continuing to work hard.

We think the school gives you a satisfactory education, and have some suggestions about how it can get even better. First, we think you make satisfactory progress overall, but the school agrees that standards in science could be better. The school teaches you a satisfactory range of subjects, but it could link those subjects together better to give you more chance to develop your writing and other skills in different situations. Finally, while your learning in lessons is satisfactory, we think teachers could give you more opportunities to find ways of solving problems independently or by working in teams.

Very best wishes for the future.