

Putteridge Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109564
Local Authority	LUTON LA
Inspection number	310026
Inspection date	3 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bill Pollard
Headteacher	Ms Jane Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2003
School address	Putteridge Road Luton Bedfordshire LU2 8HJ
Telephone number	01582728262
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Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage, the high achievement and standards, the work and deployment of learning support and teaching assistants, and the year group and subject leadership. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, parents' questionnaires, interviews with staff, pupils and the chair of governors, and extensive school documentation including its self-evaluation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no reason to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school for its type. The socio-economic background of families is broadly average although a below average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. There is an above average proportion of pupils from a wide range of different minority ethnic backgrounds and 23 currently have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with that expected for the children's ages.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school, which provides its pupils with a high level of care and excellent opportunities to learn and achieve to their full potential. The school is successful because it is outstandingly well led by the headteacher and senior leadership team. The success of the school is reflected in the pupils' clear enjoyment of their work and play. The vast majority of the parents are also aware of the school's success and are very positive about their children's experiences. One wrote, for example, that the school is 'absolutely brilliant, the staff are welcoming and professional at all times. The atmosphere is caring and warm, and children thrive here'. This is supported by the findings of the inspection and the school gives excellent value for money.

When children enter the Reception year, they have a wide range of attainment. Although broadly in line with those expected overall, their personal, social skills are often good and this can be seen in children's well-developed attitudes towards learning in Reception classes. However, their communication, language and literacy skills, especially early writing skills, are often below those expected for their age. They make excellent progress so that by the time they start Year 1, most children have achieved the standards expected and often exceeded them.

In Years 1 and 2, the excellent progress continues. By the time they leave the school, pupils reach standards that are consistently exceptionally high so their achievement is outstanding. In 2007, Year 2 pupils, although a more challenging cohort, were still helped to maintain these levels in writing and mathematics. Levels in reading were above average. The current Year 2 cohort is well on target to achieve even higher results. In addition, the teachers' own assessments and the evidence of pupils' work show that there is clearly high quality work in science, art and design, and design and technology. However, the school plans to create more opportunities to further develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. All groups of pupils in the school make equally excellent progress towards the individual levels expected of them and the challenging targets set.

These high standards are achieved through the outstanding teaching and learning. Teachers work very hard to plan consistently effective, high quality lessons and activities that match all pupils' needs and learning styles. They are very well supported by the teaching assistants and nursery nurses who have a wide range of roles in the school. They are effective in supporting all pupils, including the youngest children and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. The curriculum provided offers pupils excellent opportunities to learn the skills necessary for their future education and lives after school. There is a wide range of appropriate enrichment activities to help bring learning alive and make it more meaningful.

The care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they have adults they trust and can turn to if worried or unhappy. The school's very caring nature is also evident in the efforts made to set up the very successful 'Family Room' and to fund a family worker. She is making excellent links between the school and home, and is supporting staff, children and their families in a number of vital ways that have an impact on pupils' welfare and ability to learn and make progress. Safeguarding requirements and other expectations regarding child protection and welfare are met. The school offers excellent levels of personal support for the children. For example, one parent felt able to say, after approaching a teacher regarding her child's learning and behaviour, 'My concerns were valued and respected

and together we have seen a marked improvement.' This partnership is evident from many parental comments and from observing the work of the school, and is especially strong for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The school provides outstanding academic guidance. This is owing to the excellent relationships teachers and other adults have with the pupils. Work is well marked and this helps older pupils know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and teachers are aware of how well individuals are doing. Intervention in the learning process by providing extra support is used imaginatively and for various purposes. For example, not only those with learning difficulties or disabilities or language needs but also groups of middle ability and high achieving pupils receive support to provide a boost to their learning and to their self-esteem.

These high levels of care result in outstanding personal development. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they have very positive attitudes towards learning. Their knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy is excellent for their ages. They willingly take responsibility. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others and happily raise money for a range of charities. They are developing excellent literacy and numeracy skills, along with growing computer skills, and they are outstandingly well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The school's success is underpinned by very effective leadership, which all staff strongly insist is consistent, and there is a shared vision and educational direction for the work of the school. The school is constantly looking to improve and innovate, and there is no hint of complacency in its work. The team leaders and subject leaders provide strong leadership in their areas. Leadership is evident throughout the school, not only from the senior staff, and a major strength is the way in which all staff take responsibility, especially through the very effective performance management system. The governance of the school is outstanding and governors offer excellent levels of support and challenge. They share in the school's clear vision not only for itself but also for its developing work with other local schools. The high standards achieved consistently over time, together with the excellent leadership and the improvements made since the last inspection, show that the school has an outstanding capacity to maintain the high quality of its work and to continue improving further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding because of the excellent indoor and outdoor accommodation, the very effective work of the staff and the excellent progress made by the children. Although the staffing has changed since the last inspection and staff experience varies, leadership has been clear and effective to ensure the provision has remained strong. There have been significant improvements especially to the outdoor facilities and their use, and this now provides an excellent, imaginative and safe area in which children can play and learn. The planning ensures an appropriate balance between adult directed and child-led activities. The classrooms are very well resourced. In addition, the staff have led the development of a very effective system for assessing children's progress which helps all staff to be clear about how well individual children are doing and to intervene where appropriate to support their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills.

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Annex A

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

4 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Putteridge Infant School, Luton, LU2 8HJ

I am writing to thank you for the help you gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my day with you, watching you work and play. I especially enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you like about the school.

I think you are right to be very happy at school because you are very lucky to go to such an outstanding one. Ms Thomas and all of the other adults work very hard and very effectively to help you learn new things, and they give you interesting and sometimes quite difficult things to do. It is obvious watching you work that you enjoy these challenges and you are getting very good at solving problems in numeracy.

The teachers provide you with work that helps you to become very good at reading, writing, mathematics and science. I enjoyed looking at your excellent artwork and working models that are on display. Teachers help you a lot when they mark your work and by keeping very good records of how well you are doing.

One of the reasons you are doing so well is because your behaviour is so good that teachers are able to give you really enjoyable things to do. Keep it up and I am sure you will stay as happy at school as you told me you are now.

The school is excellent at deciding what it wants to do to help you learn even more new things. I think it is particularly important that the school helps you with your speaking and listening in the future. This will also help you to get even better at reading and writing, as well as to solve those difficult problems in mathematics and other subjects.

Once again, thank you for your help. I hope the Christmas activities go well and you enjoy your time at Putteridge. Keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector