

Langwith Bassett Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112616
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310949
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John Brennan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Salena Berry
Headteacher	Mr Tony Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Bassett Hill Upper Langwith Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG20 9RD
Telephone number	01623 742236
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school sits by itself in the centre of a circle of small communities close to Mansfield. Economic indicators show these to be areas of significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is almost double the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. A much higher proportion of pupils than found nationally either start or leave school other than at the usual times. Two thirds of pupils in Year 6 joined the school in the juniors, some having attended more than one previous school. Most young children's and older pupils' skills and abilities on entry to the school are well below those typically found for their ages. All pupils come from White British backgrounds. The current headteacher formally took up post during the week the school was inspected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school in which pupils do better in the infants than in the juniors. Children in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because of good quality teaching and learning. Progress slows in the juniors, primarily because teaching and learning is not as strong as it is in the preceding years. Progress in the juniors is also affected by the increased number of pupils joining the school during the year and by below average attendance. As a result, by the time pupils leave the school, standards are below average and achievement in relation to pupils' individual starting points satisfactory.

The leadership, management and the capacity for further improvement are satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate. This, and an extended induction period, has helped the new headteacher make a prompt start on building on past achievements. Currently, the monitoring work of key staff leading improvement is not helped by shortcomings in the pupil progress tracking system. Information is collected in different ways, which makes it difficult for leaders to fully analyse patterns of achievement and to establish areas of performance that require further investigation and action.

Nevertheless, leadership at all levels has gained a clear understanding of what needs to be done to bring teaching and learning in the juniors up to the standard of that found in the infants. While all teachers manage pupils well, it is in the infants that lessons are more engaging and give pupils a clear picture of what to do in their work. Too often, lesson openings in the juniors are too long and do not involve pupils enough. During subsequent group work therefore, pupils working by themselves do not have sufficient knowledge of what it is they are to do and do not do as well as they should.

Overall, pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. The vast majority of pupils know what it takes to make and nurture friendships. They play a central role in bringing the wider community together. The curriculum is satisfactory overall with work to make the curriculum more creative and exciting at an early stage. In an effort to broaden horizons, pupils go on a good range of trips. However, their understanding of the life and customs of the differing ethnic groups living in Britain is underdeveloped.

This is a caring school. Systems for safeguarding pupils comply with guidelines. However, the need to strengthen the tracking of pupils' progress results in the overall quality of care, support and guidance being satisfactory. Pupils receive good pastoral support, especially the emotionally vulnerable and pupils joining the school later than usual. Parents are quick to recognise this; many rightly praise the school for its welcoming and supportive ethos. This is typified by one parent, who said that this was 'one of the best schools my child has been to.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and close the gap from often very low starting points towards the expected goals for the end of the Foundation Stage. At the end of Reception, standards in personal development are close to the level expected. However, standards in all other areas of learning, especially aspects of literacy, are below the expected levels. While accurate assessments ensure that staff tailor work well to individual children's needs, they are not well designed for comparing the effectiveness of provision with national trends. The Foundation Stage leader manages her team extremely well and a consistency of approach in teaching and

learning is evident. Staff are skilled at joining in with children's learning and asking questions that help children to think and talk. A good balance is struck between child led and adult led activity. However, indoor learning makes a more telling contribution to pupils' development than outdoor learning. This is because the outside area is not easy to reach and outdoor activities do not always have a clear enough learning focus.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement by the end of Year 6 by improving the quality of teaching and learning in the juniors.
- Ensure the systems for tracking pupils' progress accurately identify strengths and weaknesses and lead to improvements in standards and achievement.
- Improve pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of life in multicultural Britain.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Good teamwork and teaching see pupils achieve well through Years 1 and 2. While standards in reading and writing are a little below average, and are nearer to average in mathematics, progress is good. Progress in juniors slows down mainly because so many pupils either arrive or leave during their junior years and because of some poor attendance. Pupils' achievement is adversely affected but nevertheless satisfactory. This uneven pattern of achievement is also mirrored in the achievement of pupils with literacy, communication and behavioural difficulties. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science fluctuate from being average in one year to exceptionally low in another. Currently standards are below average and based on pupils' starting points, their achievement is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils mostly behave well both in and out of the classroom. However, in class some pupils sit back and do not join in learning enough. In the playground, particularly when there is too little to do, some pupils can become boisterous. Pupils have a good understanding of what it takes to live a healthy lifestyle and many walk to school. Pupils play a central role in bringing their communities together, often planning and running their own businesses, such as film nights. Such enterprises lay sound foundations for their work at their next schools and adult life. The newly formed 'mini play leaders' and the growing influence of the school council help pupils take responsibility for their school. The use of individual targets, which are well known by pupils, gives them a good understanding of how to improve their work. Pupils' understanding of life in multicultural Britain is limited, and consequently their spiritual and moral, social and cultural development, overall, is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Consistent strengths are to be found in the relationships staff establish with pupils and in their management of pupil behaviour. Classrooms are calm and voices rarely raised. Marking gives pupils a good steer on how to improve their work. Lessons are carefully planned, with clear overall aims. It is the ability of some teachers to put across key points in a dynamic and exciting way that sets the best teaching apart. Teaching is stronger in the infants because overarching lesson aims are broken down so pupils understand them and find them useful. Work proceeds at pace with the constant involvement of pupils, through talk and preparing them well for follow up work. In the juniors, there is a tendency for teachers to tell pupils what to do, rather than help them explore for themselves, for instance through talking and working together. As a result, pupils are often unclear what it is they will need to do to demonstrate success. Where teaching assistants support groups of pupils, which they do well, pupils make better progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There have been endeavours to make the curriculum more practically based. The carefully considered deployment of teaching assistants and flexibility in pupil groupings makes this particularly successful in Years 1 and 2. Elsewhere, subjects such as science have been given a more investigative edge, whilst projects such as 'Inspirational Writing' have broadened writing experiences. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that pupils practise writing and other key skills in an interesting way through other subjects. Work, such as on the dangers of drugs, makes a reasonable contribution to pupils' personal development and their understanding of how to stay safe. There is a good range of trips and clubs for pupils to join, which enriches their lives and adds to the enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Adults have pupils' best interests at heart. The learning mentor tailors her approach well to pupils' individual needs. Furthermore, productive partnerships with a range of other agencies are helpful. While many assessments of pupils' progress are carried out, the school is not making effective use of assessment information to promote further progress. Efforts are hindered by a fragmented system for tracking progress, which makes it difficult to gain a clear overview of how well pupils are doing. Information is used well to set targets for pupils in their everyday work. However, the targets in pupils' individual plans can stay the same over time. Efforts to boost attendance have worked well following the personal contact made with families. This has halved the number of pupils with poor levels of attendance. Mechanisms for safeguarding pupils' safety are secure.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has quickly recognised the effective work of leadership in creating a happy school. There has been a long-standing strong sense of community spirit. Keeping these

strengths in mind, he is planning to raise standards and develop the school further. A carefully considered and extensive induction programme for the headteacher has helped this. Time has been used well to enable the headteacher to gain an overview of strengths and weaknesses, particularly in teaching and learning. Consultation with key staff, governors and pupils has aided the refinement of the current school improvement plan. Productive partnerships with the local authority have contributed to strengthening the leadership roles of other key staff. Monitoring has taken place, although it has been somewhat spasmodic. School self-evaluation is not yet guided fully by the rigorous interrogation of school data. The informal means that have been used to check school effectiveness also characterise the monitoring work of the governing body. However, governors have a good range of expertise, which they use well to give the school support and to ask some searching questions.

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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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?	3

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Langwith Bassett Primary School, Upper Langwith, NG20 9RD

Thank you very much for giving me such a warm welcome when I visited your school recently. It felt like I was visiting one big happy family. I would like to share with you what I thought about your school.

Yours is a happy school. You play your part well by getting on with each other and trying hard with your work. You know a lot about how to live healthily and it is good to see many of you walking to school. You and the staff help children new to the school settle in well, which is especially important as lots of children arrive part way through the year. You also do a good job in bringing children and parents from the surrounding area together. However, I felt that you need to find out more about other people in Britain from different backgrounds, who have different cultures and beliefs from your own.

There are some good things happening in your classrooms, especially in the infants. There are things here that teachers do that could also be done in the juniors. I have asked the school to take some of the good ideas, especially in how to make learning interesting, and ensure that they happen in the juniors more than they currently do. You can play your part by ensuring that you join in as much as you can in lessons and especially by listening and taking an interest when the teacher is talking to the whole class.

Your teachers know how well you are doing in lessons, although I think this could be improved. I have asked the school to find a way of keeping a closer track on how well you are doing and to make sure it uses this information well in helping you make even more progress.

Your new headteacher, staff and governors have lots of other ideas about how to make your school better still and they have made a start on many of these. You can help in this by continuing to share your ideas with the headteacher and other adults in the school.

Once again thank you for your welcome and good luck in the future.

John Brennan

Lead inspector