

Lifton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113256
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311180
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graeme Barriball
Headteacher	Kui Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2004
School address	North Road Lifton PL16 0EH
Telephone number	01566 784288
Fax number	01566 784899

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the pupils' achievement in writing; the progress made by higher attaining pupils; and the impact of shared leadership on school self-evaluation and development. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, parent questionnaires and school documents and discussions with staff, pupils and a representative of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This small school serves Lifton village and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. A small minority have White European backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English. A broadly average number of pupils have free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and an above average number have statements of special educational needs. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. The school has been awarded a Healthy Schools status, ActiveMark Gold and a Travelwise award. A new headteacher was appointed to the school just over a year prior to the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lifton is a good school that has improved over the last two years and continues to improve. Development work has been correctly and successfully targeted at raising standards and improving the consistency of pupils' progress. Children in the Reception class are given a good start to their education. Pupils in the rest of the school now make good progress and by Year 6, pupils demonstrate above average standards in their reading, mathematics and science and average standards in writing. Until recently, pupils have made only slow progress in Years 3 and 4 and this has necessitated hard work in Years 5 and 6 to make up lost ground, particularly in writing. Although pupils in Years 3 and 4 now make good progress, the need to catch up is still keeping Year 6 standards a little lower than they should be.

Pupils love their school and parents approve of what is provided for their children. Pupils are very positive about the work they do, in particular, when the whole school focuses on a subject for a week. They talked enthusiastically about the bridges they had designed and built during a recent science week. This work is an example of the impact the newly designed curriculum is having on pupils' motivation and learning. Pupils understand the importance of trying hard, attempting to do something that seems difficult and supporting each other's efforts. Pupils are encouraged to work together in pairs and teams and this, together with the improving standards, ensures they are well prepared for their next stage of education. Additional activities are provided for more gifted or talented pupils that encourage the good progress they now make. The good curriculum ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, active and well.

The staff's successful efforts to enthuse and motivate pupils is a key feature of the good teaching they receive. A collegiate approach to the development of teaching is increasingly evident in a consistency of approach that is promoting greater consistency in progress. The very good skills of teaching assistants are used well. Progress in reading, for example, is positively supported by group reading sessions that are skilfully led by teaching assistants. Relationships are strong. Pupils get on well with adults and each other. They report, 'We are very much all friends,' Most behave well in class and around the school. Both parents and pupils commented, however, that there have in the past been a small number of less well behaved pupils. Whilst this is no longer the case, there remains an occasional undercurrent of restlessness in some classes. Teachers manage this effectively, but the time taken can reduce the pace of a lesson.

All pupils are known and valued as individuals. Procedures for ensuring their personal well-being and their protection and safety are very strong. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who use English as an additional language are very well supported. As a result, they make good progress. Because they are presented with good role models by staff, pupils with more complex needs receive good support from their friends. One pupil commented on how helpful her classmates were when she was in a wheelchair after an operation.

Much time, thought and effort has been put into securing the rise in standards. The school effectively tracks the progress of individuals and groups to tightly focus the strategies needed to improve their progress and standards. Action plans are drawn up, interventions organised and progress thoroughly monitored. Knowledge about individuals is translated into realistic and challenging personal and academic targets. Whilst pupils have a good understanding of their personal targets and know how to use these to help them, for example, collaborate with others or concentrate better, they do not fully understand how to use their academic targets

to help improve their work. Despite the time that is clearly taken by teachers in marking work, this is not always done with sufficient precision to show pupils where they have done well in a piece of work and where they could have improved.

Good leadership and management has supported and enabled improvement. The new headteacher has made a strong start in leading the school. She is developing shared leadership and this is having a positive impact. The senior team includes both teachers and a teaching assistant, ensuring a united approach from all members of the school team. This shared approach is being extended to parents, who are consulted regularly and have opportunities to offer opinions, for example, through a parent council. The sharing was summed up by a parent who wrote, 'Our school is very friendly with a community feel.' There is very strong governance. Governors have been very proactive in supporting the headteacher and new leadership style. Governors have detailed knowledge of the school and, although supportive, add a valuable element of challenge. Pupils, through the school council, are beginning to play their part and to make a positive contribution. As a parent wrote, 'Pupils are encouraged to make their school a nice place to be.' During the inspection, for example, members of the school council met with a county councillor and the local authority's head of strategic planning to discuss the upgrading of school toilet facilities. The shared approach and the track record of improving standards demonstrates the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Because they are well taught through a good curriculum that provides them with both direct adult support and the freedom to choose and learn from a wide variety of activities, children in the reception year make good progress. By the time the children start Year 1, the majority have achieved the expected goals for their ages and a few have exceeded them. There is good leadership and management, and parents comment on the good quality of care their children receive and how this helps them to settle quickly and happily into school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking clearly explains to pupils where they have succeeded in their work and where and how they could improve it further.
- Help pupils to understand how to use their academic targets productively.

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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?	2
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	2

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

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

13 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Lifton Community Primary School, Lifton, PL16 0EH

I really enjoyed my day at Lifton and would like to thank you for your help and very friendly conversations. I know you will be pleased to know that I think yours is a good school.

This is what I liked most about your school:

- The way you get on well together and enjoy your time in school.
- The good progress you are making in English, maths and science.
- That your teachers and helpers work hard to help you to learn.
- Your school tries to help every one of you to do the best that he or she can.
- There is a range of interesting activities provided for you by your teachers and helpers.
- Adults take good care to make sure you are happy, safe and well.
- Everyone in your school is working together to make it even better.

To make things even better, this is what I have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that teachers' marking clearly shows where you have done well and where and how you could make your work better.
- Help you to understand how you can use your literacy and maths targets to help you improve your work.

Through your school council, you can help the teachers to do this.

Once again, thank you. I know that you will continue to try hard to do well.

Best wishes Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions Lead inspector

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Rowena Onions
Lead inspector