

# Lordship Farm Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117330
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312572
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Paull

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	387
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sally Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ben Parry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Fouracres Manor Park Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3UF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01462 620550
<b>Fax number</b>	01462 623133

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

In order to establish the school's overall effectiveness, the inspection focused on how well leadership and management, including governance, have kept track of pupils' progress through the school to ensure that it is maintained at a rate as fast as it should be. The strength of pupils' personal development with particular emphasis on their behaviour, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the effectiveness of their own contributions to the school and surrounding community were also a focus of main attention. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders and subject coordinators, teachers, pupils and three governors including the Chair, observations in classrooms, and a scrutiny of the work of pupils in Year 6, an analysis of school data to track progress and standards, and parents' questionnaires. Some observations and discussions were carried out to check the quality of other aspects of the school's work, but not in detail. No evidence was found to suggest that the school's own evaluations are substantially incorrect and, where appropriate, these evaluations are included in this report.

## Description of the school

Lordship Farm is larger than most other primary schools and has its own Nursery. The headteacher took up his post in September 2007. While most of the school's pupils are of White British heritage, a significant proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds and several speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for a free school meal is much lower than in most schools nationally. The percentage with learning difficulties and disabilities is also below the national average, although this figure has sometimes varied significantly in particular year groups. Attainment on entry is a little above what is usually found.

The school has Young in Herts, and Hertfordshire's Quality Standard for the Early Years, Investors in People, the Gold Artsmark and Healthy Schools awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Lordship Farm is a good school where pupils thrive academically and where their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Parents are supportive of what the school offers with the vast majority speaking very warmly of it, feeling that it seeks and provides a strong partnership with them. Many took the trouble to write notes when returning their questionnaires, saying that Lordship Farm has always been a good school and that the new headteacher has made a strong start in maintaining its performance and their high regard for it. Overwhelmingly, their impression is that the staff care considerably for their children, treating them as individuals and helping them to make good progress academically. A typical comment stated, it is a '...brilliant very well run school, with teachers who are professional and really care for the progress of children'. Evidence in the inspection agrees with this.

Good leadership and management have ensured that the quality of teaching, based on a broad curriculum, is good and that pupils receive exceptionally high quality support and guidance. The curriculum is well planned and is enriched with high quality provision for the creative arts through which interesting links between subjects are built explicitly for pupils. As a result, standards in a wide range of subjects, as well as English, mathematics and science, are above average and sometimes well above and progress is good. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are attentive, helpful to adults and towards each other. Classrooms are typified by pupils' high levels of involvement in activities and attentive listening when their teachers are instructing the class or asking them questions. This clearly contributes much to the good quality of learning that occurs. Whenever asked, pupils are very quick to express their pride in their school and to confirm that they experience a lot of enjoyment when working. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils readily explain ideas related to healthy living and ways of keeping safe. They do much to help the school run smoothly, volunteering for many little jobs around the building and in their classrooms. School councillors are very pleased with the opportunity provided by this more formal context to put forward ideas and to influence decisions.

A system known as 'buddies', whereby Year 6 pupils provide help and counsel to children in the Reception class, is greatly appreciated by both age groups. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Pupils are especially adept socially. They are very willing to reflect on what is right and wrong, and they make reasoned sensible decisions about how to act. Boys and girls take part enthusiastically in cultural activities such as singing groups. For example, they make telling contributions in the community, such as performing Christmas carols at a local elderly people's home. The school's musicians take part in a local festival at Plinston Hall and themed days that entail various styles of dance and music from India or nations in Africa are well received, enjoyed and learnt. Much of the artwork on display around the building is above expected standards for the relevant age groups. Such skills, set alongside pupils' good standards in literacy and numeracy, are preparing them well for their future.

The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating performance are good and challenging targets are set and usually met. However, variations in pupils' progress have not always been picked up quickly enough, as not all staff have routinely used the information available to them to adapt planning of what is taught. Since his arrival, the headteacher's accurate analysis of pupils' progress throughout the school has revealed slight anomalies and differences between some groups. For example, pupils from Indian families seem to attain their targets particularly well. Conversely, and unusually for the age group, it was also found that in the 2007 national tests potential high achievers amongst Year 6 girls did not do as well as boys. Not enough time

has elapsed to ascertain reasons, but the planned review of practice to determine causes is entirely appropriate. The aim is to establish whether changes in what is taught and how to teach it might be required to meet the learning needs and styles of groups or individuals who do not progress as fast as others. Such attention to detail, seen in the light of the school's past good record, suggests that its capacity to improve further is good. Governors are supportive and the headteacher has involved them fully in his reviews of provision and what has emerged about pupils' progress. They exhibit no complacency about the school's present good effectiveness and want to support developments that will move it on further towards excellence.

### **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

#### **Grade: 2**

Provision and quality in the Foundation Stage are good, because management and coordination of provision are good. A large majority of parents are pleased with how their children settle and get on. One written comment, typical of many, says of the nursery that '...each child's personality and ability is known and catered for and they get an unbeatable good foundation in early skills.' Another comments that teachers in the Reception are friendly, approachable and always willing to '...listen and respond to what I tell them about my child - they show they care'. Teaching and learning are indeed good. Staff put much emphasis on providing a range of experiences so children can achieve effectively across all areas of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all of them reach expected goals for the age group.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

To move forward towards excellence, the governors, headteacher and staff of this already good school should:

- Ensure that all staff use outcomes of monitoring pupils' work and progress routinely to inform planning.
- Complete the planned review of causes affecting perceived differences in pupils' performance and implement any necessary corrective action to ensure that all pupils do as well as they might.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	1

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

22 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Lordship Farm Primary School, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3UF

Thank you for your remarkable friendliness and politeness when I visited your school. You behaved exceptionally well, helping such a lot, telling me your views and ideas, and showing me your work. It is great that so many of you are enjoying what you do. You think your school is a good place to be and that your teachers care about you. I agree with you - Lordship Farm Primary is a good school. I also enjoyed my working lunch with the School Councillors and talking to them about what they do. They carry out a very good job in helping the staff to make things run smoothly for all of you.

Here are some more things that are especially good about your school

- Your work is better than in most schools and you are making good progress because your teachers teach you well.
- Your behaviour, thoughtfulness towards others, willingness to explore what you can learn from cultures other than your own and your enjoyment of learning are all exceptional.
- Your teachers take excellent care of you when you are in school and offer you outstanding support and guidance.
- Mr Parry and the senior staff are working closely with all other staff and have good ideas for improving your school even further.

Here is what I am asking your headteacher, staff and the school's governors to do next

- Make sure that they always use all that they know about your work and progress to plan what you should do next even more carefully.
- Make sure that what they teach and how they teach it always suits your own different ways of learning. You can help with this by telling them what you think helps you to learn things most easily.

I hope that you will always work hard, and enjoy and be as proud of your school as you are now.

Yours sincerely

John W. Paull

Lead inspector