

Ladbroke Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117370
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	312590
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	238
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lesley Gawen
Headteacher	Mr Roger Green
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Watkins Close Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 1QB
Telephone number	01707 652882
Fax number	01707 642832

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Inspection number	312590

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Whether the school's leadership and management have brought about improvement in the Nursery and Reception unit, ensuring that children's learning and development support good achievement.
- The extent to which all levels of leadership and management use quality monitoring systems to track and assess progress and set challenging and realistic targets, so learning and teaching raise standards successfully.
- The extent to which systems of monitoring are in place and used to ensure that pupils' values, attitudes and behaviour are known to be improving.

Evidence was gathered from observations of work in the classrooms, parents' questionnaires and discussions with parents, many pupils including school councillors, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the inclusion officer, subject leaders, other staff, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school has a similar number of pupils as most others of its type. It offers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in a Nursery and Reception unit for three to five-year-olds. The nursery-aged children attend part time. Pupils are drawn from areas of private, social and local authority housing. The number known to be eligible for a free school meal is below average. Attainment on entry to the Nursery year is close to what is usually seen for children's age. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds matches the national average closely, as does the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who find learning difficult for an identified reason is below average, although the number with a statement of Special Educational Need is above average.

There have been considerable staffing changes recently, including senior leadership. An interim headteacher is currently leading the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money. There are many signs that it is improving rapidly: not least is the way that appropriate reviews and regular monitoring of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning have resulted in improvement. In addition, good improvements to the EYFS provision have led to children's effective learning and development in the Nursery and Reception unit. These judgements are in line with the school's evaluation of its own performance. Self-evaluation is used satisfactorily to establish what needs to be done to secure ongoing improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher's effective leadership, together with the support of a temporary deputy headteacher, has resulted in good staff teamwork. New members of staff have been brought together as a unit, showing determination to provide the best for all pupils. This has effectively sharpened the academic care and guidance that the school provides. The main impact is seen in a considerable growth in the use of systems to assess and track pupils' progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, which is confirmed in senior leaders' monitoring records. The amount of good teaching is steadily increasing and good lessons were observed during the inspection. This is indicative of an increasing amount of good teaching throughout the school. However, the improvement is not fully consistent so, over time, pupils' learning remains simply satisfactory. By the time they leave in Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science usually reflect their starting points, and are a little above average when attainment on entry is higher, but are average in year groups that began average. This reflects the school's national test results, which are currently above average in Year 6.

What prevents achievement from being good is that pupils who find the work easiest do not always reach the levels that match their ability. In mathematics, for example, girls are under-represented in achieving above average levels, whereas in writing, boys are under-represented. Year 2 results are somewhat erratic. For a number of years, they were above average, then they dropped back in 2006, then rose again in 2007. Currently, they are average. Teaching staff are beginning to address all these matters as they become more adept in altering what they teach to prevent progress of different groups slowing down. Senior staff are providing the necessary training and support, empowering all staff to spot quickly any patterns that show up in their tracking of progress, which is now carried out more frequently. The partnership with the local authority is strong and has been a key factor in providing advice about successful methods and learning initiatives. For example, more refined target setting has been introduced and shared effectively with pupils. Lessons always begin by explaining the point to be taught. Pupils are also told how they will know that they have learnt successfully. They are enthusiastic about this development, enjoying the responsibility of helping to evaluate their work for themselves. The school's experienced teaching assistants have been well trained, so they support very effectively pupils who find learning harder than others. A recently appointed inclusion coordinator is also increasingly effective in ensuring that targets for these pupils are precisely written. Whilst all these developments are underway, they have not yet had the time to increase progress to faster than satisfactory rates.

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are satisfactory and similarly improving well. Pupils' behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They know right from wrong. They take the lead from staff in welcoming new pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds very happily, involving them well in their playground activities. All pupils work amicably together in groups. This, linked with good outside agency support for those who speak English as an

additional language, means that these pupils, like all others, settle quickly, learn and progress satisfactorily. Pupils are interested in learning about each other's cultural heritage and are willing to reflect or to be excited about things that are new to them. They say that they are pleased to attend the school, and attendance is satisfactory. Good procedures to care, guide and support pupils are instrumental in removing barriers to learning that might otherwise prevent vulnerable pupils from progressing. Pupils say they feel safe at school, although a few are at times inclined to move a bit too quickly along the corridors. They understand the importance of exercise, but some are not sure about a healthy diet. Pupils take part satisfactorily in community activities. They contribute well to helping the school run smoothly, carrying out routine jobs in their classrooms and through their school council. Plans have been drawn up to improve toilet facilities, for example, owing to pupils' raising this issue. However, as a result of limited opportunities, their contributions to the locality around the school are not as well developed. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills mean that preparation for their future education and well-being is good.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Procedures to monitor the school's performance are used rigorously. Statutory procedures are in place to safeguard pupils, ensure their protection, and meet health and safety regulations. A review of the school's satisfactory curriculum is under way. This is resulting in a process of re-development to improve links between subjects and to follow recent guidance on planning for the National Curriculum. While this work is not complete, it is well underway and a programme of visits, visitors and a good range of clubs, which pupils support well, are providing further enhancement. The governing body is very aware of the need to appoint wisely and, in the meantime, to establish sustainable management routines. However, many of the school's middle managers are new to their posts and, as a result, are still developing their expertise. Nevertheless, the school's capacity to improve is clearly satisfactory and growing. A significant minority of parents expressed concern for the school's future in their questionnaires, despite their support for what is now underway. Others feel that they do not have complete information about the way forward, even though the staff are approachable. One summed it up: 'I know these teachers are doing their complete best for my child, because they are so willing when I go to them. I think things are a lot better, but I don't think we get enough info [sic] about developments'. The headteacher is aware of these concerns and plans are afoot to strengthen this important partnership with parents and to rebuild confidence in the community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

In the Nursery and Reception classes alike, children enjoy the learning environment with which they are provided. It is bright and attractive, and encourages them to engage in activities and to learn successfully. Good leadership is ensuring the planning of a balance between occasions when children choose their own learning toys and resources to investigate as compared with when adults direct their learning. Links with parents are open and friendly, producing a flow of information that helps children to settle down quickly and to benefit from the good learning and development available. The accommodation permits a free flow between the Nursery and Reception rooms and into the secure outside area. This enables children to move into Reception smoothly when they reach the end of their first year in the unit. Teaching is good, because learning activities are well planned across all areas of learning, indoors and outside. Sometimes, particularly when children are choosing independent activities, opportunities are missed to assess their progress. Adults take good care to ensure that children are safe while, at the same

time, encouraging them to take a full part in what happens in the main school. For example, there is mutual benefit when older pupils support the children, acting as playleaders. They also welcome reception-aged children into the school council, taking their ideas seriously. Assessments indicate that children make good progress. From average starting points, a high proportion reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils who find learning easy achieve the levels that they could in all subjects.
- Build further on the developing roles of subject coordinators and middle managers to ensure that improvement in what the school provides is sustainable.
- Improve the partnership with parents, so they feel better informed and more confident about the school's future success.

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

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 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

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

22 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Ladbrooke J.M.I. School, Potters Bar, EN6 1QB

Thank you for your help when Mrs Maitland and I inspected your school. You were polite and interested in what we did and this meant that we enjoyed our day with you. You told us lots of things about your school and we thought that you behaved well. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education and that it is improving well. We agreed with your school councillors about this. They also thought that things are improving. Mrs Maitland and I believe this is because your headteacher and deputy headteacher are good leaders, who are helping all the staff to develop their skills of leadership and management. That means although your progress has been satisfactory up to now, it is getting better.

Here are some important things that are good about your school already:

- The staff look after you well, including checking your work carefully, setting you targets and showing you how to improve.
- What is provided for young children in the Nursery and Reception unit is good.
- You respect each other well and are interested in each other's ideas, values and cultures, know right from wrong and work together well.
- It is good that so many of you are happy with what your school does for you and enjoy going to it.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants are good at helping children who find it difficult to learn, so they make good progress.

Here are three things that we have asked the staff, headteachers and governors to do:

- Show pupils who learn more quickly how to speed up their progress further. You can help with this by continuing to be enthusiastic about your targets and working hard to reach them.
- Build up the leadership and management skills of all the staff even further.
- Work more closely with your parents, so they know more about future plans for the school and feel confident about its future success.

I hope that you will always try to enjoy school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely,

John W. Paull

Lead inspector