

Lunsford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118516
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312971
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Monan
Headteacher	Malcolm Goddard
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	Swallow Road Larkfield Aylesford ME20 6PY
Telephone number	01732 843352
Fax number	01732 871402

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

standards and pupils' achievements

the effectiveness of the action taken by the school to raise standards in English

the effectiveness of the school's target-setting systems.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of school and nationally published data, pupils' work, teachers' planning and the views of parents, and discussions with pupils, staff and representative governors. 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, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school, sharing a campus with a junior and an infant school. The vast majority of pupils come from the adjacent housing estate. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

One comment from a parent about the school summarised the views of many, 'Lunsford is an excellent school. Not only does it achieve the very best from its pupils, it also has excellent relationships with parents.' This is an outstanding school, where staff work very hard and all connected with the school – governors, staff, parents and pupils – are rightly proud of its achievements.

Since the last inspection, when already above average, standards have improved further. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Pupils make outstanding progress so that from their broadly average starting points, their standards are exceptionally high by the time they leave the school. Whilst above national averages, English standards are not as high as mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement in writing is not as strong as in reading. The school's tracking data shows that a renewed focus this year on developing pupils' writing skills is proving successful, and English standards are now closer to those in mathematics and science. The school effectively ensures that all pupils, including those with a learning difficulty and/or disability, progress rapidly; for example, almost every pupil achieves the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In 2007, over two thirds achieved the higher Level 5 in both mathematics and science, which is significantly higher than nationally. Pupils' achievements give them a very strong foundation for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Both parents and pupils value the very positive relationships with staff, reflected in a parental comment, 'We have always been able to approach the teachers to discuss problems, and they have always been dealt with.' When asked about what makes the school special, pupils reflected: 'Our teachers are more like friends. They always take time to listen if anyone is upset.' The school very successfully pre-empts problems, for example by running anger management courses for pupils showing early signs of behavioural difficulties. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and is a major factor in ensuring that learning and play take place within a calm environment where pupils feel very safe and free from harassment. Pupils have an exceptional understanding of their own feelings and the impact of their actions on others, so that bullying is not an issue. Their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding as a result of the high quality care and guidance, with its emphasis on promoting pupils' well-being. In addition to a carefully planned personal and social education programme, the school regularly evaluates and changes the range of additional programmes it runs. These raise pupils' self-esteem so that all pupils can take a full part in lessons. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as shown in their outstanding attendance which is consistently well above the national average. Pupils respond particularly well to the many aspects of the reward system, such as attendance badges and when their efforts are recognised in the merit and 'show' assemblies.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to their school and to local and worldwide communities through taking on responsibilities. Monitors organise equipment for the playing field and ensure that younger children have someone to play with. The school has extensive links with a Ugandan school. Pupils show their pride in the school and their commitment to it by representing it in local events: for example, every pupil in Year 6 has represented the school in a sports or music event. Workplace skills are promoted well through a series of project weeks, giving pupils from different year groups valuable opportunities to develop teamwork skills. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, both inside and outside school. They take advantage of the fruit and water provided by the school. Many represent the school

in local competitive sports events. A few parents and pupils expressed some concern that the requirement for healthy food in packed lunches is more rigorous than for hot lunches, but the school is aware of their views and is considering how to make standards more consistent.

One of the reasons for the school's success is that it never stands still. Staff have high expectations and embrace innovation, but new initiatives are planned carefully to make sure that they bring about the desired improvements. The curriculum is exciting for pupils and enriched by a very wide range of additional activities, including opportunities for residential experiences for older pupils and frequent visitors to share their experience and expertise. Teachers pass on their enthusiasm for learning to their pupils, contributing well to outstanding teaching and learning. Pupils are very focused in lessons and ready participants in their own learning. They are articulate, making perceptive observations as part of whole-class sessions and are confident to raise questions themselves if there is something they do not fully understand. The school makes excellent use of specialist and group teaching to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met effectively. Teachers ensure that pupils complete a piece of writing daily and use subjects such as history and geography well as the context for pupils to develop their writing skills. However, they do not always make as much of this as they might. They do not set out their expectations about the literacy skills to be included or routinely refer to achievement in literacy when marking the work.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. Staff value the headteacher's leadership, enthusiasm and support for them to develop professionally. They appreciate the balanced measures of challenge and support he provides. Teamwork is very strong and staff new to their posts or roles feel supported and encouraged to be fully accountable for their responsibilities. Senior and middle leaders systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work and take action quickly if it is needed. Governors make an excellent contribution to development planning, basing this on a thorough evaluation of the school's current position. Staff and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The success of the action taken already, for example in improving pupils' writing, illustrates the school's outstanding capacity for ongoing improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in their learning and develop very positive attitudes to school in the Reception class. Children enter the class with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although this varies a little from year to year. The high adult to child ratio is used well to engage children in discussion about what they are doing and results in children making particularly good progress in their language and literacy development. Children are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, making a very positive contribution to the whole-school emphasis on children's social and emotional development. Good leadership and management ensure that activities are planned well to give an effective balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Although children engage in imaginative role-play, for example in setting up Noah's Ark, they do not make quite as much progress in their creative development as in other areas. Sometimes they are given too much support and are not always required to use their own experience to design and make things for themselves. Adults know the children and their individual needs very well and monitor their progress closely. They use this information well so that children are guided carefully in a way which maximises their learning. The outside area has been extended and improved since the last inspection, so that it can be used in all weathers. It is bright and stimulating, and children make good use of it to develop their physical skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of cross-curricular links to improve writing skills.
- Provide more opportunities for children's creative development in the Reception class.

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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	2
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

7 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lunsford Primary School, Aylesford ME20 6PY

As you know, your school was inspected recently and I promised to tell you about what I found out. Firstly, I would like to thank you for your warm welcome and for spending time talking to me about the school.

You said that you go to a fantastic school and I agree. These are just some of the things I liked about the school.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you show a lot of consideration for one another. This helps to make the school a happy and safe place.
- You said that you think of teachers as 'friends' and that they always take time to talk to you if you have any problems that need sorting out.
- You do exceptionally well because you work very hard in lessons and enjoy the activities that your teachers plan for you.
- Many of you help others around the school and this helps the school to run smoothly, particularly at playtimes when older pupils organise games which help you to stay fit and healthy.
- You are rightly proud of your school and represent it well in sports and music events.

I agree with your teachers about the important things they are planning that should help you reach even higher standards and have asked them to:

- Make sure that when you write in subjects like history and geography that they remind you to practise your writing skills, and then tell you how well you have done when they mark your work.
- Give children in the Reception class more activities where they have to design things for themselves.

You can help by continuing to do your best.

Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires. It was helpful to hear what they think about the school. I wish everyone at Lunsford all the best for the future and hope that Year 6 pupils enjoy their new schools in September.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings Lead inspector

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