

# Linden Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120068
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	313499
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Barter

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	471
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Raj Bharkhada
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zaheer Mohamed
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Headland Road Evington Leicester LE5 6AD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 738435
<b>Fax number</b>	01162 730824

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school where 95% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the most significant group being of Indian heritage. A very high proportion (90%) of pupils come from homes where English is not the main spoken language. About 10% of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. There are more boys than girls in each year group. The school is oversubscribed.

Children's attainment on entry to the school in the Foundation Stage (Nursery or Reception) is lower than expected for their age, particularly with regard to their language skills.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Linden Primary is a good school that helps pupils achieve well academically and become mature individuals who are prepared well for their lives ahead. Most parents are pleased with the all-round education provided for their children. One summed this up by saying, 'In recent years, the school has concentrated on the holistic development of pupils. This is something that they have clearly benefited from, with confidence shining through.' Pupils' personal development is, indeed, outstanding and makes a significant contribution to the happy, harmonious school atmosphere. They are delightful young people who enjoy school enormously because they are cared for well. Pupils know that all the adults have their best interests at heart.

The building blocks for learning start in the Foundation Stage. Children make a good start because adults help them develop confidence and independence. They quickly overcome early difficulties through a strong emphasis on promoting their language and personal skills. Standards are generally above average but there was a dip to broadly average levels in mathematics and science in 2006 and 2007. A rigorous analysis of data and pupils' work by senior leaders clearly showed that pupils were making uneven progress across the school. Senior leaders took decisive action by implementing a new mathematics programme to develop pupils' broader mathematical skills. At the same time, the school focused on helping pupils to think for themselves and to apply their independent learning skills across all subjects and particularly in mathematics and science. Pupils' work and school assessments show clearly that these strategies have been very effective. Pupils' progress has accelerated and it is now consistent in all year groups. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well because the curriculum provides them with exciting opportunities to learn. The school is very successful in bringing pupils' creativity to the fore and encouraging them to think and work imaginatively. This has a significant impact on the progress of all pupils in literacy. Boys throughout the school thoroughly enjoy writing and make better progress than many other boys of their age. Good teaching, which helps pupils to develop enquiring minds and the ability to understand how well they are learning, has had a significant impact in all aspects of pupils' work. The more able pupils often achieve well because they are highly motivated to learn but are not always challenged to do their very best in lessons or through marking of their work. There is scope for more to be attaining higher levels in science and mathematics.

Senior leaders, including governors, have a strong commitment to providing an education that ensures good achievement, both academically and personally. The development of phase leaders' roles has given them greater capacity to support senior staff. They have good skills in analysing how well pupils learn and identifying where improvement is needed. The school has accurately identified that these skills now need to be nurtured amongst other staff, so that everyone has a clear picture of where pupils could be making even better progress. Nevertheless, the effective strategies implemented so far demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

From their starting points, children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Lively teaching and good attention to welfare give children a good start to school life and ensure that most reach the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception Year. A few

who are at the early stages of learning English still have a little way to go to meet the expectations for their age in relation to their communication and language skills. While they make good progress in their understanding and use of English, opportunities are occasionally missed to extend their vocabulary as they engage in practical activities. All children make good progress in their personal development because they are given ample opportunity to learn how to play and share with others. This is evident as they take on roles as pirates in a ship, write in the 'post office' or play drums as a group. Children develop confidence and independence and greatly enjoy choosing imaginative activities which promote all the areas of their learning. Boys make a good start in developing early literacy skills through fun activities such as writing a 'letter in a bottle'. The accommodation and outdoor environment have been much improved since the last inspection and are used well to enrich children's learning.

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

- Ensure that teachers provide consistent challenge for the more able, in lessons and marking, so that more achieve the higher levels, particularly in science and mathematics.
- Develop the skills of all staff in analysing the school's data so that they have a greater understanding of where pupils' progress could be accelerated further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Strategies that give children a good base of key skills in the Foundation Stage are built upon well as pupils move through the school. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well in English through good teaching and effective support from teaching assistants. As a result, pupils reach standards that are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6, and challenging targets are met. In relation to the national picture, boys do particularly well in English. Standards in mathematics and science have been broadly average for the last two years mainly because too few pupils reached the higher levels and targets were not met. Focused improvement of pupils' learning skills, and implementation of effective strategies to broaden their mathematical understanding beyond routine calculation, have been successful. Pupils are now making consistently good progress in all year groups. Although the more able pupils could still do better, standards of work are once more above average.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop mature personal qualities, having an excellent awareness of other cultures and religions and good relationships with one another. One pupil's comment that 'We all live together – it's a family', reflects another made by a parent who said, 'This is a school that will produce very good citizens for the country.' Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and they show care and consideration towards others. Their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Although a few pupils and parents report some bullying at playtimes, pupils say they feel safe because adults deal quickly with problems. Despite some term-time holidays, pupils' attendance overall is good. They thoroughly enjoy school, typically saying, 'It's the best school in the world.' Pupils are healthy and fit, enjoying the many opportunities for sport and exercise. They make an excellent contribution to both the immediate and wider community, and readily take responsibility, such as running lunchtime clubs and raising funds to help others. Pupils' strong academic and personal skills mean they are very well prepared to succeed in the future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Dedicated staff who are willing to try out new ideas and approaches to learning are key to the school's success. Teaching assistants are a valuable asset and work very effectively to support pupils' individual needs and help those who are learning English. Staff are very aware of the wide range of abilities in each class and spend much time preparing imaginative and practical activities which contribute to pupils' high enjoyment levels. However, work for the more able pupils does not always have sufficient demand to help them progress beyond the expected level for their age. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils, a good variety of teaching methods and styles, use of technology to enrich and extend learning and the pupils' keenness to learn ensure their good achievement.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is clearly focused on developing enjoyment of learning and building the skills needed for life ahead. Outdoor learning helps pupils to investigate and practise newly learned skills and is contributing to the improvement in standards in mathematics and science. This was evident when pupils checked that they knew how to measure against a scale before going outside to measure the playground. Staff plan meaningful activities which naturally link subjects together, but recognise that pupils need even more opportunities to practise their mathematics and science skills in subjects such as geography. Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in other subjects are good and contribute well to the good progress made in literacy by both girls and boys. Activities are planned well to help those pupils who need extra support make good progress. However they are less effective in ensuring that the more able pupils make the best possible progress. Good use is made of partnerships, such as those with sports specialists, to enrich the curriculum and extend pupils' experiences.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Staff know the pupils very well, take a genuine interest in their welfare and progress, and ensure that safeguarding procedures are fully implemented. The outcomes in terms of pupils' excellent personal development are plain to see. Exemplary relationships in the school, and pupils' comments such as, 'teachers are really nice' and 'adults always sort things out when we fall out' also indicate a high standard of care. Academic guidance is good in lessons. Pupils learn how to review what they already know and to assess how well they have met their targets through regular discussions with their teachers. Marking of pupils' work is frequent but is not always rigorous enough to help the more able pupils understand how to produce their best work. Recently introduced 'learning logs' are an effective method of extending pupils' learning at home and encouraging parents' involvement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

There is a shared vision by the headteacher and staff to provide pupils with a high quality primary education. Senior leaders make effective use of information gained from monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. This has led to improved achievement and standards, particularly in mathematics and science. Phase leaders play an effective role in analysing pupils' performance in each key stage and ensuring consistent progress as they move through the school. The school knows that the skills of other staff now need to be developed in the same way so that they quickly identify where pupils' learning and progress could be improved further. Governors are committed to the school, using their good knowledge to accurately identify its strengths and weaknesses and hold it to account for its performance. In questionnaires, the vast majority of parents expressed positive views about the school. However, a minority report a loss of confidence. Inspectors investigated all their comments fully and found no significant evidence to support their concerns. The school's successful strategies to improve demonstrate that the school is well on the way on its journey of further improvement.

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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	1
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	2
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?	2

<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

1 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Linden Primary School, Leicester, LE5 6AD

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome when we came to visit recently. You are really excellent ambassadors for your school. You are polite and friendly and talk so well about everything you learn and do, in and out of school. Well done!

You told us that you are proud of your school, and you have every right to be. Your school provides you with a good education. That means that not only does it help you to do well in tests, but it makes sure that you really know how to think for yourselves and that you want to learn all you can about the world around you. This makes a big difference to how well you do right from when you first start school and will help you to continue doing well as you get older.

Your school provides you with lots of interesting ways to help you learn. It is great that you are making such good use of your large outdoor area to help you with your learning. We saw this when you were doing some measuring outside as part of your maths lesson. I hope the 60 trees that you planted in the spinney flourish so that children in the years to come can enjoy the Linden Forest that you have made.

Your teachers and all the other adults, work hard to make sure you do as well as you can. They really help you to think about what you know already and make sure you understand how well you are doing towards achieving your targets. I have asked them to also make sure that those of you who are quick to learn are always given challenging work to do. I have also suggested that when teachers mark your books, they tell you how you can do even better the next time.

The adults who run the school have checked how well you are learning and worked hard to make sure that you do as well in mathematics and science as you do in English. You write some really great stories, by the way! The school has lots of information about how well you are learning. I have suggested that all the adults are involved in using this to check how you are doing so that you do as well as you possibly can!

Keep up the good work!

Yours faithfully

Mrs Helen Barter Lead Inspector

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Lead Inspector