

Scraptoft Valley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120086
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	313510
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Micheal Burden
Headteacher	B Kent
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	New Romney Crescent Netherhall Estate Leicester LE5 1NH
Telephone number	0116 2413444
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

In this larger than average school, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and in some years it is particularly high. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is very low. A well above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and in some year groups, pupil movement in and out of the school is above average. The school has a Healthy Schools Award and a Children's Centre is currently being built on the site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The good quality education provided by the school is the result of good leadership and management. The headteacher, staff and governors are passionate about helping pupils to do as well as they can. The good Foundation Stage provision gets children off to a good start. Governors and senior managers keep a very close check on how well the school is doing and parents overwhelmingly support its work. They describe the school as 'brilliant' and say their children 'look forward to coming to school'. Pupils too praise the school highly, stating confidently that 'teachers will always help us'. The school is particularly successful in securing the pupils' good personal development and well-being due to the good care, guidance and support it offers to them. This begins as soon as any pupil starts school and is much appreciated by parents. One parent for example, stated that her son's 'learning and confidence have soared' after transferring to the school.

Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well from a very low starting point, particularly in personal development, literacy and mathematical development. Occasionally, however, teaching and the curriculum do not promote pupils' numeracy skills as effectively as their literacy skills, or provide enough challenge for more able pupils. Pupils make good progress in English and science and satisfactory progress in mathematics. Standards are broadly average overall but were well below average in mathematics in 2007. Pupils know they have targets for English and mathematics but do not always understand how to reach them, especially in mathematics. Teachers' marking does not always help this because it does not often enough show pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

The well structured curriculum supports all aspects of pupils' learning well, although not always as well as it might in numeracy. It ensures pupils successfully learn about healthy living and know how to keep themselves safe. Accurate self-evaluation and perceptive leadership and management have enabled the school to improve since the previous inspection. This record, the fact that the school knows what it needs to do to secure further improvement, and the strong teamwork amongst all staff, demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching combined with very good quality care, guidance and support for children and their parents ensure children settle quickly into school routines. They make good progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, and in their ability to speak and listen to others. Few children reach the standards expected for the end of the Reception Year, except in personal development. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The staff keep a close eye on how well the children are doing and the well organised curriculum includes a good range of exciting activities that meet their personal learning needs. However, those activities do not always fully challenge the more able children. Staff successfully encourage parents to join in activities, especially reading, to help them see how they can help their children learn. Parents are very pleased with the start their children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils understand better how to solve mathematical problems involving calculating in different ways to raise their achievement in mathematics.

- Provide challenging work for more able pupils throughout the school and give them more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teachers' marking and target-setting so that all pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, reach broadly average standards from a very low starting point. Throughout the school, more able pupils make at least satisfactory progress but they are not always challenged to take their own learning further. This sometimes limits their progress in lessons. In 2007, the test results in English and science were broadly average for pupils in Year 6, but in mathematics, they were well below. Despite the significantly high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the year group, the test results for English were higher than in 2006. Progress in English and science is good, reflecting the focus the school has had on improving these areas. In mathematics, progress, while satisfactory, is slower. Writing remains the weakest aspect of English but it is getting better because the school has worked on its improvement. Pupils clearly enjoy reading but they do not always understand the meaning behind the written word. This hinders their progress in mathematics, where they find difficulty understanding and solving problems. Pupils with learning difficulties make particularly good progress because of the high levels of effective support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils reflect thoughtfully on what makes the school successful in their eyes. They told inspectors: 'Friends care for you', 'People will always help you', and 'You learn something new every day.' Pupils enjoy school. This is very evident in their good attitudes and their satisfactory and improving attendance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. After starting school, they quickly learn to share, co-operate and be thoughtful about themselves and others. Pupils have a well developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. They say any form of harassment is rare and they take increasing responsibility for their own actions. Pupils behave well and think carefully about matters of right and wrong. They respect other cultures, faiths and beliefs and through the well attended environmental awareness club, they also learn to respect and care for the environment. Pupils readily grasp the many opportunities they have to contribute to the school and wider community. They do this well, for example, as school councillors, by supporting younger pupils and by fund raising for charity. Their preparation for later life overall is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The pupils' good progress is the result of energetic and well planned teaching. The brisk pace and variety of most lessons and the strong emphasis on practical work and physical activity sustain pupils' attention and work rate. This is successfully improving pupils' overall achievement. The vast majority of pupils' work is accurately matched to what they need to learn, but more able pupils are not always given sufficient challenge. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour

extremely well. They lead by example. Their respectful, courteous behaviour creates a calm and ordered atmosphere throughout the school. This successfully develops in the pupils responsible attitudes to their learning and to each other. Nearly all lessons focus on developing pupils' literacy skills. This is rightly seen as crucial to pupils' ability to do as well as they can in all subjects. The same focus is not there for numeracy skills. Teachers carefully assess and record pupils' learning and progress. However, their marking is somewhat inconsistent in its quality and usefulness. It does not often enough show pupils precisely what they need to do to help them to improve their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The strong focus on personal, social and health education contributes greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school and their willingness to learn. The school's successful links with external providers, for example, a local college, help parents to understand the curriculum and learn how to support their children's learning and personal development. The constant promotion of literacy and personal development skills successfully contributes to pupils' learning in all subjects. The creative use of time within the well considered organisation of the curriculum contributes well to these areas, as does the developing links between different subjects. All of this ensures that almost all pupils develop their learning as much as possible. There is scope, however, for the curriculum to provide more challenge for more able pupils, and to promote numeracy skills to the same extent as literacy skills. An extensive range of well attended clubs and activities, visits and visitors promotes personal, physical and cultural development well and contributes to their good understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is extremely vigilant in caring for, guiding and supporting pupils' personal development and well-being. An impressive range of routines involving staff, parents and external agencies, has secured the pupils' good behaviour and improved their attendance. Parents and pupils applaud the zero tolerance policy on bullying and racism and the school is rightly proud of it. Equally impressive are the good procedures for safeguarding pupils. All pupils are supported well. The systems to help them settle into school are good, as are those for easing the transition to secondary school.

The school assesses and tracks pupils' progress well and regularly sets targets to help them improve. However, not enough pupils really know their targets, or how to reach them. This means targets are not as useful as they might be in helping pupils make quicker progress. Overall, academic guidance is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management and very strong teamwork amongst the staff support pupils' learning, personal development and well-being really well. They have also enabled new staff very quickly to become part of the school's success story. The checks made on teaching and learning are accurate and robust as is the school's evaluation of its own work. For example, leaders and managers identify and remedy underachievement, and have very clear ideas about

how to improve marking and target-setting to do this. Understandably, they focused first on improving literacy. They are now working on mathematics, which had slipped, and on the provision for more able pupils, having improved the provision for the less able. It already arranges some worthwhile extension activities for those pupils considered to be 'gifted or talented' such as Saturday classes or guitar lessons.

The school sets it self-challenging targets, which it usually meets and tries hard to exceed. It is part way towards setting targets for individual pupils but this work is at a relatively early stage. It is not fully understood by all pupils, and teachers do not often enough refer to targets or the steps towards them in their marking. Governors' monitoring of the school's work is very systematic. It focuses strongly on the priorities in the school's comprehensive improvement plan. Governors are particularly vigilant in checking that all staff implement agreed decisions. The school's good links with parents, external agencies and other schools contribute effectively to the pupils' good progress.

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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?	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	3
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	3
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	3

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

20 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scraftoft Valley Primary School, Leicester LE5 1NH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and that your teachers always help you. You and your parents are right in thinking that you go to a good school. Here is a summary of the other good things we found:

- When you start school, the staff do everything possible to help you settle. They care deeply for you and are trying hard to make sure that you are given every opportunity to do well.
- You behave really well. You have really good manners and you are willing to learn and help others.
- You are taught well and your teachers think carefully about how to organise what you are going to learn. As a result, you get many exciting things to do.
- The headteacher and governors lead and manage your school well. They keep a very close check on your learning and try very hard to make sure your teachers do all the right things to help you learn better.

We thought carefully about how your school could help you to do even better and here is what we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do:

- Help you learn better how to solve mathematical problems involving different calculations so that you can make faster progress in mathematics.
- Give harder work to some of you who need it and more opportunities for you to have a say in how and what you want to learn.
- Get your teachers to show you more clearly the steps needed to improve your work and to check that you know and understand how to reach your targets.

You can help too by making sure that you know your targets and doing your very best to achieve them. We hope very much that you will always enjoy learning as much as you do now and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Doris Bell Lead inspector

Annex B

20 September 2007

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Yours sincerely

Mrs Doris Bell
Lead inspector