

Loatlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121910
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314145
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Timothy Bristow HMI

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	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Larmour
Headteacher	Andrew Spencer
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2005
School address	Harrington Road Desborough Kettering NN14 2NJ
Telephone number	01536 506404
Fax number	01536 506405

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Loatlands Primary School is above average in size. The attainment of most children on entry is below national expectations. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below average. The school has the Investors in People and Basic Skills Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school in which the personal development and well-being of pupils is good and their achievement is satisfactory. Children are given an excellent start in the Foundation Stage.

By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards that are broadly average. The achievement of the more able pupils is lower than it should be. This is because the school does not use assessment information effectively enough to ensure it is making the progress it should do.

The school has a happy atmosphere in which pupils are kind and caring to each other. They are polite and friendly when talking to adults, demonstrating good levels of self-confidence and consideration to others. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins pupils' good behaviour. Pupils feel very safe in school and have a good understanding of how to obtain help when they need it. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles by taking regular exercise and enjoying healthy food at breaks and lunchtimes. In recognition of this, the school has gained the Healthy Schools Award this year. Most pupils take an active part in the life of the school. Many have responsibilities as young leaders and peer supporters. Nearly all the pupils contributed to the fund-raising in school that recently helped to provide the new Reception class play area. Pupils have a strong relationship with the local community, taking part in many town events. For example, pupils recently laid wreaths at the local Remembrance Day service. Pupils have a satisfactory preparation for education in secondary school because of the average standards they achieve and their good social skills.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum offers many activities that make lessons exciting. For example, pupils' work with artists has enabled them to create paintings of a very high standard. All Key Stage 2 pupils take part in a good range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum offers many activities to enable different groups of pupils to make satisfactory progress. However, it does not provide the more able pupils with enough opportunities to develop their independence and creativity. Pupils receive insufficient guidance about how to improve their work because procedures for marking and setting targets are used inconsistently.

The self-evaluation of the school is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, school leaders and staff have accurately identified areas for improvement and worked successfully to raise standards. Consequently, the schools' capacity for improvement is satisfactory. However, the school has too many priorities in its development plan. This has limited its effectiveness because teachers are trying to make too many changes to teaching and learning at one time.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The inspection team agree with parents who report that the Foundation Stage 'offers a fantastic introduction and lead up to school. The range of opportunities children have to undertake is excellent.' Children enter Nursery with skills that are below national expectations. Language skills in particular are depressed. They make good progress, particularly in acquiring social skills, so that by the time they enter Year 1 standards are in line with national expectations. This is because the provision and leadership are outstanding and the care provided is excellent. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are delighted to take part in the many exciting activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- challenge the more able to achieve higher standards by increasing the opportunities for them to be independent and creative learners
- use assessment information to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should and to give them guidance on how to improve their work
- draw up a realistic and achievable development plan that is clearly focused on the priorities that will be most effective in improving teaching and learning.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Adequate progress is maintained in Key Stage 1 and in 2007, Year 2 pupils achieved average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2007, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were broadly average in mathematics and science. In English, all the pupils achieved the average Level 4. However, the proportion of pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieving the higher levels in 2007 was below average. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 is uneven. Progress slows between Years 3 and 5 and then accelerates in Year 6, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress overall. Progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because of the high quality of care and support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils enjoy coming to school and say that the adults really care for them and help them to work hard. As a result, attendance is good and new arrangements for the start of the school day have helped to improve punctuality and secure better road safety outside the school gates. The pupils know what to do in a potentially dangerous situation with regard to 'Stranger Danger'. They feel confident that, if they go to a school monitor or 'Red Cap', their concerns will be dealt with considerately. The monitors take their role very seriously and older pupils enjoy working with the younger pupils helping to organise their play. Pupils readily accept added responsibility. For example, in assembly, the older pupils acted out a scenario about bullying with no prior rehearsals and enjoyed the experience, as did the rest of the school. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils enjoy their work with the local community, such as their involvement in the local history project on World War 2. The pupils are developing all-round skills that will help to take them through life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Aspects of teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Lessons are well structured and classroom routines are well established. Groups of pupils are well taught by the highly trained teaching assistants. Relationships in all lessons are very good and pupils demonstrate a strong desire to achieve. However, in many lessons, the more able pupils do work that does not sufficiently challenge them. This is because planning does not make effective

use of assessment information. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously but, in some lessons, they are not given sufficient advice on the steps they need to take to improve their work. Pupils, especially the more able, have insufficient opportunities for independent learning and creativity in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Many exciting additional activities add interest and enjoyment to lessons. Good links have been established with partners, such as the local secondary school, to enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, pupils recently worked with other schools on a video-conferencing project. There is an extensive range of trips and residential visits during the school year, adding depth to the curriculum. Nearly all pupils take part in the exciting and varied range of extra-curricular activities. Recent changes to the curriculum are beginning to give pupils satisfactory opportunities to practise English and mathematics in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care for the welfare of pupils is a strong characteristic of the school. Good procedures ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Staff create good relationships with pupils and give them confidence that they can seek help and support when they need it. The support for vulnerable pupils and those with emotional difficulties is good. The school makes effective use of links with external agencies to provide expertise and to ensure a wide range of support is available to all pupils.

Insufficient use is made of assessment information to ensure that all groups of pupils make the progress that they should. The school has recently introduced an assessment procedure for checking the progress of pupils. At the time of the inspection, this has not had time to affect the progress made by pupils. Teachers set targets for pupils to guide them on the next steps they need to take to improve their work. However, these are used inconsistently, and many pupils do not benefit from them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have made satisfactory improvements so that standards have risen since the last inspection. However, some improvements are not brought about quickly enough. The development plan and measures used to monitor the work of the school do not focus sufficiently on the priorities that would bring about rapid improvements in teaching and learning. Subject leaders in English and mathematics have been effective in making improvements in provision. In other subjects, there have been insufficient opportunities for leaders to do this. The school recognises this and has taken action to enable them to lead. However, at the time of the inspection, this has not had an effect on the work of the school. Challenging targets have raised the standards for a majority of the pupils since the last inspection. Governors are supportive and recent training means that they are now better placed to hold the school to account for its actions. The majority of parents fully support the work of the school.

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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
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?	3
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?	3

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?	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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**

23 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Loatlands Primary School, Desborough, NN14 2NJ

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We felt very welcome. If you remember, we came to look at the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. We enjoyed meeting you and thought you were very friendly, helpful and polite. You are kind and caring to each other and enjoy coming to school. You take part in many exciting activities, which you told us that you thoroughly enjoy. We think that you take your responsibilities to the school and to the wider community seriously and your contribution is valued. You work hard in lessons and are eager to learn.

You get a super start to school when you are in the Nursery and Reception classes. Your headteacher and all of the staff are working hard to look after you and improve your education.

Considering everything, we decided that yours is a satisfactory school.

To make things even better, we have asked the school to do the following.

- Give more challenging and interesting activities to those of you who generally find the work easy.
- Offer you more advice on how to improve your work so that you do as well as you can.
- Concentrate on changes that will really make a difference to improving your lessons.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and acting on the advice they give you to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow HMI