

Lane Green First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124174
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314831
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Whitehouse
Headteacher	Kathryn Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 0001
School address	Bilbrook Road Bilbrook Wolverhampton WV8 1EU
Telephone number	01902 434300
Fax number	01902 434302

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

There are four classes for pupils in Years 1 to 4 and a Nursery and Reception class. Over the past four years the school has had to manage a falling roll and significant staff changes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards well below the expected levels for their ages especially in their communication, language and literacy. This has been the pattern for several years. The school has gained a Healthy Schools award and an Activemark for physical education and sports.

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 with some good features. The headteacher provides a corner stone for the school as the impact of the falling roll forces significant change. She demonstrates good leadership and management skills, continually re-establishing a clear direction for the work of the school whilst promoting a purposeful atmosphere for learning. During a period of high turnover of staff over the past three years, the headteacher has managed the subsequent disruption very sensitively. Many of the staff, including the deputy headteacher, are new to the school or to their posts of responsibility for subjects. As a consequence, the school's organisation relies heavily upon the strengths of the headteacher. The school's evaluation of its own performance is good and priorities for improvement are identified well. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and has taken decisive actions to tackle the decline in standards by strengthening key aspects of provision. However, there are still some aspects of middle management that are in the early stages of development and consequently capacity for further improvement is currently satisfactory but expanding.

Because of a very stable environment throughout the whole of the Foundation Stage, the provision made for the youngest children is outstanding and they get off to a very good start. They progress well but standards are still below the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Changes to staffing through the rest of the school has been managed well to ensure a minimal disruption to pupils' learning. The reorganisation of classes into single year groups is adding stability and teaching is improving, bringing about improvement to standards. Consequently, the rate of progress has improved and standards in Year 2 come close to the national average. Standards in Year 4 in English, mathematics and science, while still below expected levels, are also improving well. Pupils of lower ability and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in all classes now get very good support and their progress accelerates well with many reaching the standards expected.

Teaching and learning are largely satisfactory and there are some good and outstanding lessons. Pupils respond with enthusiasm especially when teachers use the interactive whiteboards and engage them in practical activities. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to discuss their ideas and to explain what they are thinking before embarking upon the written tasks. Teachers mark work effectively but pupils do not respond to written comments to show that they know what they need to do to improve further. The poor presentation of work and untidy handwriting are often not corrected. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the consistently good pastoral care, guidance and support. Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and really enjoy their lessons especially when they work with a partner. Behaviour is good and pupils encourage each other to keep this up. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information particularly well to plan lessons for groups of lower ability pupils but are not yet using it effectively enough to ensure sufficient challenge for pupils who are more able.

The curriculum is satisfactory and ensures that pupils are adequately prepared for their next school and for their future well-being. Pupils are safe within school and comment that 'Adults have always got patience with us'. Parents' support for the school is growing. The provision of adult learning sessions on site is good and helps parents to support their children's learning better.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are outstanding. Teaching and learning are excellent and the learning environment is exciting and bold. Children all make good progress and gain confidence. They willingly cooperate with each other in activities and their behaviour is very good. By the time they enter Year 1 their standards improve in all six areas of learning. However, with language being slower to develop, they are still below expected levels in their speaking, reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum is vibrant and exciting and offers children a wide range of stimulating play-based experiences. Children's assessment records are maintained very thoroughly giving a very accurate picture of each one's development across all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers use assessment information more robustly when planning to ensure that more able pupils are challenged enough to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to discuss their ideas and to explain what they are thinking before embarking upon the written tasks.
- Ensure that pupils respond to teachers' marking so that it is clear that they understand what they need to do to get better and know how to improve handwriting and general presentation of their work.

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

Already, the re-organisation of classes into single year groups is having a good impact and consequently standards are steadily improving. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards below average in almost all areas of learning and with specific weaknesses in their communication, language and literacy skills. This has been the pattern for several years. There are still weaknesses in literacy in Years 1 and 2 and many pupils are unable to express themselves clearly when describing what they are learning. It is evident that standards in Year 2 are improving well and come close to the national average in writing and mathematics but are still below average in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities throughout the school are now making good progress. This is ensuring that the school's performance shows steady improvement and, although current standards in Year 4 are below average, they are rising. The more able pupils do not make as much progress as expected and this holds back the school's performance overall. Much of the work seen across the school is poorly presented and pupils' handwriting is very untidy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and polite to each other and all adults because of the constant emphasis the school places on caring and helping each other. Relationships are good and there are high levels of respect between adults and children. Most know how to remain safe because they are

aware of the need to avoid risks. The Huff and Puff club helpers demonstrate accomplished organisational skills and good ability to be authoritative without being bossy towards other pupils. They understand the notion of teamwork, explaining, 'Well, we all have jobs and we take it in turns'. Pupils realise the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle, although sometimes they admit they give in to the temptation of crisps and chocolate. They make a good contribution to the school community through the eco and school council committees and clearly understand their rights and responsibilities. However, the links with the local community are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good but their awareness of the different customs and traditions of people living in our multicultural society is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are confident and class management is good, ensuring that all children behave well. Planning is detailed and activities are generally adapted appropriately to the needs of most pupils. This is especially so for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities many of whom make good progress. However, the more able pupils are often not challenged enough by the tasks they are set. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively and pupils learn best when practical activities are planned. This was evident in a science lesson in Year 3 as pupils investigated the properties of different soils. However, teachers do not always choose the most appropriate strategies to help all pupils learn the best they can. For example, teachers do not allow pupils time to explain what they are thinking before they start writing. Most teachers mark work effectively and write constructive comments in books to show pupils how they need to improve. However, pupils rarely correct their work in response to these comments.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements and is planned well to meet the needs of most pupils. They have good opportunities to use computers and other forms of technology and they are beginning to use these in a range of subjects. Links across subjects are developing well and the introduction of a modern foreign language is proving successful in Years 3 and 4. However, the curriculum is not planned sufficiently well to challenge the pupils who are more able. Particularly good emphasis is placed upon promoting pupils' personal and social development. Pupils attend clubs after school enthusiastically but the curriculum is not enriched enough with activities such as visits out of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is particularly strong and, as one child said 'Caring is a big thing in this school'. Every pupil is included in all that the school does. All statutory requirements and procedures to ensure their safety are in place. Systems for following up absences are good and attendance over the last two years has improved and is now satisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants have a clear understanding of the pupils' needs, especially for the large number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has good contact with external agencies when necessary to support pupils and their families. Good links with other schools to join in sporting and musical activities and the links with the adjacent middle school to support pupils in their

mathematical development are good. The school has a new system for tracking pupils' progress and uses these records particularly well to identify the needs of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, they do not use them so effectively to highlight the needs of pupils who are more able. Most pupils are aware of their targets for English and mathematics and refer to them whilst doing their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management, under the guidance of the headteacher, have demonstrated a strong determination to counter the problems caused by staff changes. Staffing is now more stable and effective support for professional development is well established to raise standards and achievement. Assessment records are being developed effectively. The procedures devised to plot the effectiveness of each topic in subjects such as history is innovative. Data collated give reliable assessments about the successes of teaching and learning in each unit. The school's self-evaluation is good and accurately identifies its strengths and weaknesses. The priorities for development are defined well in the school's improvement plan and decisive action taken to bring about improvement. Several subject leaders are new to their roles but are beginning to play their part in school improvement. The governing body performs its duties satisfactorily but does not monitor robustly enough to enable governors to form independent conclusions about the work of the school.

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
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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?	3
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	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	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?	3
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?	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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 February 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Lane Green First School, Billbrook, WV8 1EU Thank you for helping inspectors when we visited recently. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that it provides you with a satisfactory education and that you do some exciting things. There is a good team spirit in your school and it is a happy place.

These are the things that are particularly strong in your school.

- Your headteacher manages the school well and gives a clear direction so that it is steadily improving.
- The teaching is satisfactory overall and in some lessons it is good or outstanding.
- Nearly all of you are developing good attitudes towards your work and each other.
- You know a lot about keeping safe and you understand how to remain healthy.
- Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a very good start.
- In Years 1 to 4 you make satisfactory progress but your work is often untidy.
- You are very polite and your behaviour is generally good.
- Staff look after you and care for you well. There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to do three things.
- Make better use of the records that are kept about your progress to ensure that all of you improve standards of work in reading, writing and mathematics especially if you find work easy.
- Ensure that you have enough opportunities to discuss your ideas and to explain what you are thinking before you start your written work.
- Make sure you respond to the written comments that your teachers make in your books so that it is clear that you understand what you need to do to improve and how to improve your handwriting and general presentation of your work.

You can help by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Once again, thank you for your cooperation. Yours sincerely

Graeme Bassett Lead inspector