

Lightwater Village School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124997
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315114
Inspection date	7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Cathie Munt HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Karimjee
Headteacher	Mrs D Moffett
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Catena Rise Lightwater GU18 5RD
Telephone number	01276 473346
Fax number	01276 452438

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. She evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects:

- provision for developing learners' understanding of Britain as a diverse society
- the quality of teaching; its impact on standards and pupil development
- how effectively the school judges the impact of its actions.

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

Lightwater is a small, popular, village school. Pupil numbers, which had declined slightly due to demographic changes, are on the increase and reception classes are full this year and next. Most pupils are of White British origin. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and most speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than that usually found. The proportion of pupils who have learning needs or disabilities is below average. These needs include physical, emotional and specific learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I wish I'd had the chance to go to a school like this', was the heartfelt endorsement of one parent who rightly praised the open and welcoming ethos, the high level of nurturing, the skilful teaching and the exceptional quality of the leadership at Lightwater School. These opinions, endorsed by many other parents were fully borne out by inspection. The school is hugely successful in ensuring that pupils reach high academic standards, develop lively and enquiring minds, excellent social skills and a work ethic that will serve them well in their future while enjoying the experience immensely. This is a school where the principles of Every Child Matters are lived to the full.

The headteacher is praised by staff, parents and pupils for her humanity, organisational prowess, approachability and her sheer enthusiasm for making a difference to children's lives. She provides a very clear lead and promotes excellent teamwork that is fundamental to the school's success. With the excellent support of the insightful and focused deputy head and the experienced and creative senior teacher, she leads an extremely hard working and enthusiastic staff, who have embraced the challenge to manage the curriculum in teams rather than as separate subjects. The school rightly is considering widening these teams to include all staff thus harnessing the widest range of skills and experience and extending leadership and management roles across the entire workforce. Governors are well informed and are most professional in the discharge of their duties. Their support for the school is unequivocal. They bring a wealth of business experience that serves the school well and provides the right level of critical challenge. Consequently, most aspects of the school's provision are outstanding, preparing pupils extremely well for the future.

The quality of care guidance and support is excellent as is the provision for the pupils' personal development. Pupils' well being is safe guarded by robust procedures that are adhered to, carefully monitored, and regularly updated. Parents feel a valued part of the school and this is reflected in their children's extremely positive attitudes towards school and learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, have an excellent attendance record and have 'no trouble getting up in the morning'. Apparently, one child looks forward to the themed weeks more than to the school holidays and two pupils would change 'absolutely nothing', given a free reign. Teachers provide very helpful academic guidance, orally and when marking and even the youngest pupils could explain how they know if they have done well enough in their learning. This insight into their learning is a key factor in promoting the exceptional progress that the pupils make.

Everyone's skills and contributions are valued equally. This underpins the excellent provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, exemplified by the very well planned and delivered personal, social and health education programmes. Work with partner schools has developed a high level of awareness of the social and emotional elements of learning and the care given to developing emotional literacy is quite outstanding. Consequently, all of the children have developed the specific vocabulary required to explain how they feel and in discussion showed a high level of maturity in this area.

The school ensures that the pupils have a good understanding of their place in the global community and can converse maturely about the differences and similarities between groups in their local community. This is achieved through the use of well-resourced artefacts, high quality experiences such as visits to the mosque and taking part in the village May Day activities, celebrating major feasts and world festivals and the ongoing support for an underprivileged

child in India. Parents rightly praise the school's development of the whole person saying that 'it doesn't only teach academic subjects it also teaches children to become good citizens by treating others well'. Indeed, pupils show great concern for the few children in school that they think of as 'naughty' and are extremely tolerant of others in class and on the playground. They know about staying safe and are confident that the adults, or their friends, will help if they are sad or scared. They contribute well to the school community through the thriving school council and a parent wrote that 'an aspect that deserves particular recognition is how much the children are involved in school life, giving them confidence and preparing them for junior school'.

Teaching and learning are excellent. Skilled and enthusiastic teachers and class assistants build robustly on the very good start made in reception classes so that all, including those who find learning more challenging, continue to make exceptional progress. Due to the carefully planned progression in their work and the excellent attention given to recording pupils' attainment, in order to decide on the next steps in learning, standards in reading, writing and science are well above those for age group and have been so for a considerable time. Standards in other subjects, including mathematics are also high. Classrooms are aesthetically pleasing and provide an excellent learning environment. Displays are lively and stimulating, as is the curriculum. Supportive, yet highly challenging teaching engages pupils and encourages them to give of their best. Staff are tireless in their quest to improve provision and ensure that all pupils' needs are met well. Visitors bring the wider world into the classes and pupils benefit from meeting with such luminaries as the author and illustrator of a popular children's book. Themed weeks provide opportunities to explore topics in greater depth and to take part in practical activities such as visits to places of interest, Indian cooking and dancing. No wonder one girl said that she enjoyed lessons, 'cos they are fun and we do lovely things'. Personal, social and speaking skills are nurtured and extended by the quality of interaction that the pupils enjoy with all adults. They provide an excellent example of how to get along in a team while taking responsibility for your own actions.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior leaders provide an exemplary model of cooperation and proactive management. With the longstanding headteacher, they promote a spirit of enthusiasm and dedication that pervades every aspect of school life. Attention to detail ensures that every element of provision is as good as it can be. There is no sense of complacency and staff morale is high. Purposeful teamwork and the sharing of expertise between all adults, including parents and governors, generates a consistently high level of provision. New staff are inducted exceptionally well and this ensures continuity of provision when staff changes occur. The school community knows itself very well indeed through regular and thorough reviews of its strengths and areas for development. Staff identify issues early on and intervene effectively to eradicate any relative weakness. For example, the recent focus to improve the quality of boys' writing has produced results that are better than those nationally and this year teachers are focusing on improving the girls' mathematics results at the higher level. Parents work hard to support the school financially and they provide a vital link in their role as class representatives. Governors ensure that funds are spent wisely and that the school achieves excellent value for money. The school enjoys an excellent reputation locally and works most successfully with other agencies, and with members of the wider community such as the junior school, the local village and local religious leaders, to the children's benefit. The school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The children respond well to the excellent teaching that they receive and make very good progress in their learning so that by the end of the year almost all reach the standards expected and many exceed them. Staff are focusing particularly this year on the progress made by the youngest pupils to ensure that they do as well as they are able to, despite having a shorter time in the reception class. Parents are most pleased with the start that their children get in the reception classes. They say that their children settle rapidly and make great strides in reading, writing and number work because of the skilful teaching, the support of all adults and the enormously effective impact of the nurturing ethos. This is a particularly important element in the excellent development of children's personal, social, emotional and speaking skills. These were most evident in the way they spoke easily to the inspector expressing pertinent views on the questions asked and asking interesting questions of their own.

Children happily work and play together, whether sharing play dough to shape letters, learning to take turns and follow rules in maths' games or using the interactive whiteboard to develop shape and number concepts. Their creativity and developing knowledge about the wider world is encouraged with imaginative games, for example, deciding which creatures are the fastest when playing with the toy, African animals. They practice work and social skills when taking turns as customers, receptionists and vets in the role-play area. An excellent balance of teacher initiated and child-instigated activities means that there are many opportunities for children to acquire basic skills and to develop independence in a safe and caring environment. The well-planned use of the imaginatively designed outdoor area enhances curriculum provision and provides children with opportunities to engage in activities that are more energetic.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the recent development of curriculum teams to promote distributive leadership and harness the strengths and talent resident in the school community.

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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?	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	1
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	2
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

20 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Lightwater Village School, Lightwater, GU18 5RD

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I told you that I was looking to see how well you were getting on in school and that I would let you know what I thought about you and your school. I completely agree with you and your parents that Lightwater is an excellent school in every way. I know how much you enjoy going to school because you told me so and you also told me that the teachers and other adults look after you very well and really help you to feel special. I particularly liked the way that you spoke about looking after each other and I could tell that you are also very good at caring for the school for there was not a speck of rubbish anywhere and the toilets were lovely and clean. Well done! Here are some other important things that I found out.

- From the moment that you enter school, your teachers make learning great fun and because they know exactly what you have understood they make sure that you get enough time to practice new skills and try to make sure that you learn something new in almost every lesson.
- You make outstanding progress in each class because you are most attentive and work hard.
- You behave extremely well, get along with each other and feel safe in school.
- The school council has very good ideas on how to make things better.
- When you visit interesting places such as the mosque, you enjoy learning about the different ways that people live, work and pray and you remember these things well.
- Your headteacher leads the school wonderfully well and she gets tremendous support from the staff and governors. They all work really well with your parents to help you to do your best.

Your teachers are changing the way that they look after all the different subjects so that they can involve all of the staff in managing them. They plan to share the tasks and to use their skills to help each other. I think that this is a very good plan, don't you? I am sure that you will help them by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Munt

Her Majesty's Inspector