

Limpsfield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107040
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324514
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Reporting inspector	John Dunne

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Price
Headteacher	Mr J Bainbridge
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2006
School address	Jenkin Avenue Brightside Sheffield South Yorkshire S9 1AN
Telephone number	0114 2430925
Fax number	0114 2430925

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school which takes most its pupils from two infant schools. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds with a significant number from areas of some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than average as is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is higher than average and is increasing. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. The school has received a number of awards including, Artsmark Gold Award, Basic Skills Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where there is a clear trend of rising standards. Central to this success is the excellent leadership and drive of the headteacher. He has united all staff to collaborate effectively in the pursuit of higher standards. Pupils display very positive attitudes to learning and play an important part in the success of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive. Comments such as, 'I couldn't ask for a better school for my child to attend', and, 'Limpsfield has a fantastic team of staff, totally dedicated to the learning and welfare of every child', are typical views.

Following the inspection in 2006, standards declined in science and writing. The school leadership effectively identified the reasons and rapidly took action that brought improvement. Crucially, this action led to the emergence of a good curriculum which interests pupils and encourages them to talk about their learning before they write. This has been a key factor in the significant improvements in the pupils' writing to a standard that is now above average. The accurate and purposeful writing of Year 5 pupils following enthusiastic discussions on soil erosion, deposition and delta formations confirmed the effectiveness of this approach. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This is good progress given the pupils' starting points. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the increasing numbers of children who speak English as an additional language are making outstanding progress.

Effective systems closely monitor the progress of pupils and remedy underachievement. Teachers usually plan lessons that challenge all pupils. Teachers speak highly of the training and support they have received to help them be more effective. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school. In a minority of lessons pupils spend too long listening to teacher's explanations. This unnecessary use of time slows the pace of lessons and limits the pupils' opportunities to learn independently. Pupils have a broad sense of where they need to improve but do not consistently know the levels they are working at or what they must do to reach the next level.

Outstanding care and welfare ensure that all pupils are safe. Relationships between pupils from many diverse cultures are exemplary as is their behaviour. Consequently, pupils enjoy their education greatly. There are many examples of pupils celebrating various cultures, for example, preparing and cooking healthy food from different continents. In addition, pupils are successfully encouraged to become independent with a strong sense of right and wrong and this contributes to their outstanding personal development. Swimming lessons, high participation rates in after-school and play time physical activities and nutritious food choices all contribute to pupils adopting healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a strong contribution to their own school and wider community. For example, many become mentors for younger pupils. Pupils develop good literacy, numeracy and computing skills and this contributes well to their good economic well-being.

Improvement has been good since the previous inspection. The impact of the school's leaders and governors on improving attendance, teaching, learning and standards demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement and confirms it provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make it clear to pupils what levels they are working at so they are clear about how to reach the next level.
- Ensure that pupils have opportunities to work and learn independently in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Before 2007, standards were too low in English and science and particularly low in writing. Since then, overall standards by the end of Year 6 have continued to rise much faster than the national trend and are now broadly average. Standards in writing and science have risen because teachers exploit every opportunity to provide interesting and enjoyable writing tasks supported by plenty of chances to discuss ideas, and the amount of time allocated to science in the curriculum has increased. The quality of handwriting is excellent. These improvements, pupils' excellent attitudes to their learning and effective checking on progress are enabling pupils to reach challenging targets and make good progress in English, mathematics and science from their starting points. The increasing numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly well due to the exemplary support they receive and the way teachers and teaching assistants adapt lessons to meet their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Spiritual and moral development is outstanding due to the moving and thought-provoking assemblies and frequent opportunities for reflection about moral issues and right and wrong. Racial incidents at this multicultural school are unheard of and pupils' social development and understanding of other cultures is outstandingly developed through well planned lessons and the effective use of outside agencies. In case of a problem arising, pupils know what to do, who to turn to and how to keep safe. Rare incidents of bullying are effectively dealt with, as verified by parents. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm in all they undertake. They speak positively about lessons being fun yet challenging. They form excellent relationships, demonstrate very high levels of self-confidence and their behaviour is exemplary.

Pupils also are very alert to the importance of sensible diet and increasingly opt for healthy options at lunchtime. They take plenty of exercise, including extra sports. At break-times the playgrounds are full of pupils engaged in physical activities. Many of these are organised by playground buddies. The many examples of pupils undertaking positions of responsibility and taking part in community events, such as performing their Mummings play in the centre of Sheffield, develop their social and leadership skills well.

Much effective hard work has been undertaken to improve attendance which is now average. Pupils develop basic skills well and are learning good citizenship skills which contribute to their good economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers and pupils have a good understanding of what has been learned and pupils understand how to improve due to helpful marking. Pupils with particular gaps in their understanding are rapidly identified and underachievement is dealt with promptly. In most lessons teachers plan lessons well so that learners of all abilities are given different tasks and so all are well challenged. In these lessons, pupils are eager to learn because of the varied and interesting tasks. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities outstandingly well and so they make excellent progress. Pupils' ability to work independently and collaboratively is extremely well developed and this makes a strong contribution towards their outstanding personal development. Teachers have improved the quality of pupils' writing because they give considerable thought as to how writing can be developed and incorporate this throughout all subjects. Beautifully presented displays of stories around the school constantly remind pupils of high expectations for writing. In some lessons teachers talk for too long and the pace slows. Pupils become bored and their progress is slower because they do not have enough chance to work by themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Improvements to the curriculum have contributed a great deal to better standards and pupils' outstanding personal development. Teachers have worked hard in their planning and this is beginning to ensure that more subjects are improving pupils' opportunities to write and explore language in greater detail. The school understands that there is still further work to do before this is fully embedded. There are chances to develop writing skills in subjects other than English such as writing to an agony aunt on health matters in science lessons. Provision for the arts is exemplary. The 'big draw' event attracted the large majority of parents and involved all pupils. Pupils are involved in varied and rich experiences in the performing arts for the wider community.

Provision for history, geography and religious education supports pupils' understanding of other cultures and international global issues well. There is an exceptionally wide range of enrichment activities including residential experiences for all older pupils. This has a good impact on the pupils' social and leadership skills and their self-confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good quality of pastoral care has a significantly positive impact on pupils' outstanding personal development and good achievement. Pupils entering the school from feeder infant schools settle confidently. There are effective arrangements to ensure pupils are safe and safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. A very close watch is kept on potentially vulnerable pupils, drawing effectively on links with outside agencies and so ensuring that these pupils are cared for extremely well. There has been an increase in the number of pupils joining the school with little understanding of English. The school's very effective response helps them make exceptional progress.

Regular contact with parents has successfully reduced absence, particularly numbers of persistently absent pupils. The school has effective and well-understood procedures for checking pupils' progress. It uses the information well to identify pupils falling behind in their work and to structure extra support. Pupils are aware of their targets, particularly in English. However, because teachers do not level the tasks in most lessons, pupils do not understand clearly the level they are working at or how to reach the next stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders at all levels have a very clear vision and a shared commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all learners. Innovation and creativity are encouraged and this is having a significant impact, improving teaching and curriculum breadth. Processes for checking how well the school is doing are rigorous and well embedded, ensuring areas for development are quickly identified. Improvement strategies are well chosen. Their impact is evident in the three year trend of rising standards, significant improvements in the standards of writing, rigorous measures for checking pupils' progress and remedying underachievement, and improving attendance. Standards of teaching have improved, although there remain some inconsistencies.

The school has a very good reputation in the local community. Work both within the school and with external partners is making a good contribution to promoting good community cohesion. This is seen in the way all adults have been highly successful in creating an environment where all students are valued, want to learn and work together as a harmonious, family community who support each other extremely well. Consequently, the school is highly successful in promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination so all groups of learners are making at least good progress. Governors know their school well and hold it to account effectively.

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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 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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Llimpsfield Junior School, Sheffield, S9 1AN

I am writing on behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently. We greatly enjoyed meeting you. Thank you for the extremely warm welcome you gave us.

We have judged that yours is a good and happy school which is continuing to improve.

You enjoy school because your teachers make your lessons interesting and give you good advice so you know how to improve your work and so everyone is making good progress in all subjects. You get good opportunities to think for yourselves and are given responsibility. Because of this, you are growing up to be very sensible young people with a lot of self-confidence. Nearly all of you attend well and come to school on time. You behave outstandingly well and are kind to one another in lessons and in the playground. Everyone in the school cares for you and looks after you really well. The school is a very safe place for you.

All your teachers work very hard to help you to improve your work but particularly in your writing which is now very good. You are proud of your school and this is very good to see. Those of you who join the school from other countries and speak little English are coming on in leaps and bounds because of the outstanding support from your teachers.

- We have also asked them to tell you what levels you are working at so that you can see how to get to the next level.
- We have also asked them to give you more time in lessons to work on your own without teachers spending too long telling you what to do.

All the best for the future!