

# Locking Primary School

## Inspection report

---

Unique Reference Number	109103
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	324896
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

---

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rachael Axon
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Jones
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 July 2006
School address	Meadow Drive Locking Weston-super-Mare BS24 8BB
Telephone number	01934 822867
Fax number	01934 822867
Email address	locking.pro@n-somerset.gov.uk

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at development planning, governor minutes and policies, including those associated with safeguarding procedures, assessment and tracking documents, pupil records and samples of work. The views of parents in the 76 Ofsted questionnaires returned were also considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The success of the school in helping pupils in Years 3 to 6 to reach the levels predicted for national tests.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to raise the standards achieved by:
  - girls
  - boys who are working within average levels
  - lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- How well the school is improving achievement in writing in Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- The effectiveness of development planning in ensuring that specific weaknesses in provision and pupils' achievement are successfully addressed.

## Information about the school

Locking is an average sized village primary school in which some classes have pupils from more than one year group. About half of the small number of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. Pupils' needs cover moderate learning, emotional, social and behavioural and speech and language difficulties as well as physical needs and the autistic spectrum. The school holds the Healthy School Award and Activemark, an international award for its liaison work with schools in Sri Lanka and France and an award for financial management.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

### Main findings

Locking is a good school. Effective improvements in provision over the past few years have led to rising standards. They are now above average by the time pupils leave and are well placed to improve further.

The real key to the school's success is the outstanding attitudes to learning that it has helped create amongst all pupils. Pupils' successes are very much valued not only by staff, but also by other pupils. Many examples of the excellent impact of this strategy were seen in the reward assembly and in lessons or small group work, where pupils' pride in their success helped them to strive for even better achievement.

Both teaching and the curriculum have improved and continue to develop well, helping standards to rise, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is particularly evident in writing by Year 2, where more pupils than is seen nationally now reach the higher levels in national tests. Practical and interesting mathematical activities in Years 3 to 6 engage pupils so that they enthuse about their learning and say lessons are fun. Consequently, progress in this subject has also improved, leading to above average standards. The school is well aware that attention now needs to be given to improving the older pupils' skills in carrying out scientific investigations. Improved teaching is evident in the excellent behaviour management seen in all classes. Some of the lessons observed were outstanding, inspiring pupils to achieve exceptionally well. However, not all aspects of teaching are as good; in particular, marking does not always make it clear how pupils could improve.

Pupils are well cared for and pastoral support is good. However, the recent appointments of a family support advisor and learning mentor have helped the school to provide outstanding care and support for its most vulnerable pupils. These strengths help pupils do well in their personal development. In particular, their awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and their contribution to the school and local community are excellent. Through links with schools in France and Sri Lanka pupils develop a very good understanding of different societies and cultures, although their awareness of the multicultural nature of British society is limited.

A major reason for the school's success is the strong leadership of the headteacher. Throughout her time in the school, she has been the driving force behind school improvement. Over the past few years she has encouraged and supported both staff

and governors to develop the skills which enable them to contribute effectively to school development. Governors in particular play a major part in holding the school to account and helping it to reach the challenging targets it sets. Rigorous systems are in place for monitoring the school's work and pupils' progress. Accurate self-evaluation helps the school to successfully address specific weaknesses in aspects of its work and it is very aware of where improvement is still needed, for example in science. This gives confidence that the school is well placed to improve further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in science by ensuring that pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop good investigative skills through giving them more opportunities to plan, carry out and record their own investigations.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that pupils are consistently encouraged to do better, especially by improving the quality of marking.
- Give pupils more opportunities to develop a good understanding of the multicultural nature of British society by developing links with other schools or settings in the United Kingdom which have a greater ethnic diversity.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
---

Pupils love coming to school and really like their teachers, helping to support an improving trend in the academic progress they make. Effective learning is apparent in all phases of the school, with pupils enthused by their lesson activities and motivated to work hard. Many examples of well-focused teaching were observed such as, clear explanations, very effective use of the interactive whiteboards and challenging tasks. These qualities help to ensure that progress is good and standards are rising. Both girls and boys, including those who are working within average levels, make the same good progress as their classmates, the majority reaching above average standards by the time they leave. The effective support in place for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, language or behavioural needs enables many to reach at least average standards.

Children start school with standards broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in this first year so that by the time they start in Year 1 standards are above average. Good progress is also evident in other year groups, with the school taking account of the needs of pupils who join during these years. Strategies to improve progress in writing in Years 1 and 2 have been especially effective, with Year 2 being exceptionally good at, for example, writing riddles or using humour to engage the reader. Year 2 standards are broadly average because of the number of pupils with specific needs in this year group, although Year 1 pupils are already working at levels above those expected. By Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average, with pupils in Years 3 to 5 on course to do equally well. The real success stories are in English and mathematics, where the school sets high targets and reaches them. One reason for this, observed in a good Year 5/6 lesson, is that pupils are consistently probed to consider what they are doing and to discuss their findings with others, helping to recognise where they need to improve. Science standards do not compare quite so favourably with the national picture, largely because pupils' investigative skills are not as well developed as their

scientific knowledge.

Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to eat healthily and the importance of regular exercise. They feel safe in school and are very safety conscious themselves, looking out for each other and working and playing very happily together. The school's very effective strategies have helped raise attendance levels. However, they remain no better than average because too many pupils take term-time holidays.

Behaviour is good and, although some pupils find it difficult to behave well, the excellent behaviour management by staff means it is usually exemplary in lessons. Pupils themselves enthusiastically support their school, undertaking many roles, most notably as school councillors. They are excellent fundraisers, organising and running the school summer fair, which raised a considerable sum of money. Involvement in community events such as a joint performance for parents with several other schools is exceptionally good. Pupils reflect well on the important things in life and in their place in the world around them. They enjoy exchanging letters with their French pen pals and show a genuine respect for others who may have different backgrounds, cultures or faiths. However, they associate this much more with societies in other countries. Pupils are well prepared for their future life, most notably by their very good enterprise skills. In particular, the 'Smoothie Bar' run by the pupils provided the inspection team with healthy and very enjoyable drinks.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

The school is very responsive to the needs and interests of pupils, with the curriculum being constantly refined and adapted. Good attention is given to developing literacy and numeracy skills, including in other subjects. The school is aware that planning needs to focus more on developing science investigation skills. A

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

good range of visits and visitors and productive partnerships with other schools and agencies enhance learning. For example, pupils' involvement in 'The Noscars', where they produced an animated film, considerably supports their progress and enjoyment of school.

Effective lesson planning, together with clearly displayed targets and constant reminders given about what to do to reach them help pupils to do well. However, marking is not always so effective in promoting progress. The teachers skilled use of technology helps pupils learn new things, with support assistants effectively helping pupils who find learning difficult. Very practical and interesting activities engage and enthuse pupils, this was clearly evident in an outstanding Year 3/4 mathematics lesson in which a highly challenging measuring and calculation activity required pupils to work out and measure the proportion of different fruit juices in order to make a cocktail drink. Pupils' excellent group work and careful calculation and measuring, culminating in a very enjoyable tasting and evaluation activity, led to excellent learning. Pupils and their parents were still talking enthusiastically about it the next day. However, not all lessons are of such high quality. In a small number, pupils sit too long listening to the teacher or are not reminded about the importance of good presentation of their work.

Pupils are well supervised at all times and effective risk assessments are regularly carried out. High quality induction and transition procedures help children settle in well. Good pastoral care helps prevent bullying or racial incidents and the school is a very happy and harmonious place to be. Pupils who are particularly vulnerable are especially well cared for. Excellent liaison with other agencies and services significantly benefits these pupils and their families, leading to considerable improvement in their attendance and progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's success is due to the inspirational leadership of its headteacher and the very strong teamwork seen amongst the whole-school community. The headteacher's clear vision of a school where all pupils are valued and supported to do their very best is shared by all who work there, including the pupils themselves. The school's journey to success is the result of their commitment and hard work. All are aware that the journey is not yet complete, but there is a clear recognition of what still needs to be done and a determination to address the remaining areas successfully.

A successful leadership and management structure is in place with senior leaders, subject leaders and governors supporting the headteacher well. Good information

clearly indicates how well the school is doing, with it being used increasingly effectively to bring about further improvement. Some recent developments are already having a positive impact, for example, the new Early Years Foundation Stage team has already raised standards and the work of the new family liaison advisor and learning support mentor has strengthened the quality of care, guidance and support. Both these and other developments are well placed to improve further. In particular, the partnership with parents is being considerably enhanced through developments in induction procedures and support for families.

The school fully complies with government guidelines for the safeguarding of pupils and successfully promotes equality of opportunity for all its pupils, most notably those who are the most vulnerable. It is equally good in ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. Very good financial management ensures resources are used wisely to benefit pupils' development. Community cohesion is promoted well and the school is continuing to develop opportunities to enhance pupils' understanding of the social, racial and religious differences in British society.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Progress is especially good in communication, language and literacy and in personal development. Children spell 'tricky' words like 'was' and a considerable number already write simple sentences. Encouraged by the secret message boxes, they love writing messages to their friends. Excellent arrangements for helping children settle in to school, with a number of visits to the school and close liaison with the pre-school providers, benefit children very well. Children soon become immersed in the caring ethos of sensitive support, where their achievements, however small, are greatly valued and praised. They quickly develop confidence and self-esteem and enjoy tackling new tasks. Staff work hard to involve parents in their children's education and all parents spoken to felt this was a strength of the school. The three-course dinner served to new parents on the open evening was extremely popular.

Topics are planned around children's ideas and things they want to find out.



Activities are carefully designed at children's own level, for example they learn to make simple subtraction calculations by using model sea creatures from their topic work. Children's excellent understanding of what constitutes healthy eating is apparent in the meals they planned to 'help stop a pirate getting scurvy'. The balance of activities where children are taught new skills and those where they discover things for themselves is good. Sensitivity to individuals' needs ensures questions are directed at the level at which each child is working. Their questions are often answered with another one which helps children to think and often discover the answer for themselves. The accommodation is used effectively, both indoors and out, to encourage learning in all areas. However, resources and displays are too sparse in some areas to add a creative 'spark' to children's learning.

Leadership and management, under the control of the Lower School and Early Years leaders, are good. Very effective teamwork ensures all children have the same access to good quality provision. Good arrangements have been made to adapt assessment to meet new framework requirements, with many opportunities being taken to observe children at work. This information is then used well to plan the next steps in learning.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents who returned the questionnaire or who were spoken to had positive views about the school. All parents who responded agreed that the school keeps their children safe. Many wrote or spoke in praise of the school, typically emphasising the level of care and the willingness of staff to respond to their concerns. Most parents also acknowledge the enjoyment of, and commitment to, learning that their children exhibit, one typically commenting, 'This school has a friendly, helpful, caring feel about it... there always seems to be a sense of purpose in the classrooms.' A small number of parents expressed individual concerns, although there is no trend to these. For example, some were concerned about the level of communication, whereas other parents greatly praised this aspect. Inspectors considered this and judged parents to be well informed. In addition, the school has an open-door policy which encourages parents to meet with staff if they need more information about their child.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Locking Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 76 completed responses to the questionnaires. In total, there are 280 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	13	2	0

In one questionnaire this question was not completed

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Locking Primary School, Weston-super-Mare BS24 8BB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our time talking to you and seeing all the things you do. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. We think your school is good and are delighted that you and your parents agree.

Here are some of the things we found out were especially good about the school.

- You enjoy school very much and behave really well in lessons so you make good progress. Standards are above average by the time you leave.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily. We loved the samples you gave us from the Smoothie Bar. You are also exceptionally good at making suggestions and fund raising to help your school improve.
- Staff plan lots of interesting things for you to do; they teach you well and they help you to reach your targets.
- Adults take good care of you. They are especially good at helping Reception children settle in to school and those of you who find learning really hard get excellent support.
- You have a very effective headteacher. Together with staff and governors (and you!) she has worked successfully to help your school improve and you are all determined to help it get even better.

Here are some of the things we have asked the school to improve.

- You do well in science, but we have asked staff to help raise standards further by ensuring those of you in the older classes improve their skills in carrying out science investigations. You can help by trying really hard in science.
- Make sure that when teachers mark your work they give you advice on how to improve.
- Help you to learn more about people from different backgrounds, religions and cultures who live in the United Kingdom.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

D Wilkinson  
Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).