

Litton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112886
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325710
Inspection date	27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	43
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Prof Michael Burrell
Headteacher	Mrs Bridget Hanley
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Litton Buxton Derbyshire SK17 8QU
Telephone number	01298 871449
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average school. Pupils are taught in two mixed age classes, one of which contains the Early Years Foundation Stage children. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low and overall socio-economic circumstances are favourable. All pupils are from a White British background and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The main needs are moderate learning difficulties. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with that expected.

The school has awards for Basic Skills, Healthy schools, Anti-bullying, Eco award, an International School award and Activemark for its work in physical education. The school runs a parent and toddler group for pre-school children and an informal pre-school as part of its transition to Early Years provision. The headteacher has been in post since September 2008.

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. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and the school is striving to improve even further. There are already some outstanding features to its work and there is clearly a good capacity to take the school on to the next level. As one parent wrote, the headteacher 'is completely dedicated to seeing each child fulfil their potential in a loving, Christian and supportive environment.'

The impact of the good provision is evident in the good progress pupils make throughout the school. Even though the year groups are small in number, standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently and exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement given those pupils' starting points. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from some very effective small group planning and teaching, and they make good progress. This is helped by the arrangements made for them by the school before they start, which parents say really help children settle quickly. The good progress continues through Key Stage 1. Although results over time had been on a downward curve, this has been reversed with standards more recently being above average. Pupils in Year 2 are currently on track to achieve well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. Those who find learning more difficult, and those with particular gifts or talents all make equally good progress. Throughout the school, there is evidence of high quality art and design work. However, it is evident from pupils' books that their excellent skills in literacy and numeracy are not always transferred to their work in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education.

The high standards result from good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching which supports pupils' learning well. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and this encourages their positive attitudes towards school and their excellent behaviour in lessons. Staff have turned the school into an imaginative and interesting learning environment enhanced by very good displays of pupils' work and learning materials. The pupils say they find the marking of their work helpful in knowing what they need to do to improve.

The school offers a good level of care to the pupils and this results in their outstanding personal development. They love coming to school and this is supported by their excellent levels of attendance. This is something the school has worked hard to promote. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and the local community. In addition, the school is promoting their understanding of how others live on a national and a global level effectively, partly through good links with other schools at home and abroad. The high standards achieved in their basic skills help prepare pupils exceptionally well for their future education and lives. The school met all requirements for the safeguarding of pupils at the time of the inspection. However, staff have not given sufficient consideration to the need for assessing risks for some on-site activities, to ensure the best use of and to develop the potential of the outdoor resources and accommodation.

The headteacher has provided excellent and very clearly focused leadership since she took up the post. Staff work well as a team and are continually looking to improve their practice for the benefit of the pupils. The recent staff changes have slowed the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. The school is aware of this and is addressing the fact that it needs to develop further if teaching and learning are to improve to the next level and good practice

is to spread. The governing body provides a good level of support and challenge, and is aware of the school's strengths, including standards, and of planned areas for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with some very strong elements. Children enter the Reception class with widely differing skills and experiences. The current cohort has average abilities but other groups have skills that are above average. The school's data shows children often have good personal and social skills, and a good knowledge and understanding of the world when they start, although their literacy and numeracy skills are less well developed. Some children have good social skills, are willing communicators, while others are initially very quiet, and lack the confidence to offer their ideas in discussions. Good leadership and management ensure that all children make good progress and achieve well because they are well taught with some imaginative activities. There are effective arrangements for the children to work at times alongside the older ones in the mixed age class, whilst in other activities they work as a separate group with a teaching assistant. This provides effectively for their particular needs.

There are excellent elements of the curriculum through the regular and imaginative use of the school's outdoor area and the village as a resource to promote learning. This is illustrated in activities such as an exciting hunt for a missing teddy bear involving a 'scene of the crime' and clues for the children to follow as detectives. This leads to great enjoyment and progress in a range of areas of learning. The personal development and well-being of the children is excellent because they are very warmly cared for and this supports their learning well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Put into place a regular programme of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.
- Enhance learning by ensuring pupils transfer their excellent basic skills to work in other subjects and leaders carry out risk assessments and develop the full potential of the grounds as a learning resource.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From the levels they are at when they start school, pupils make good progress in the skills of reading, writing, numeracy, information and communication technology, and in science. The older pupils, who were often at levels above those expected when they started school, consistently reach exceptionally high standards and the current Year 6 are on track to achieve similarly levels this year. This represents good achievement. Younger pupils are reaching at least above average standards by the end of Year 2 and this represents good progress given their levels on entry. The school tracks all children on an individual basis. Good interventions for those needing extra support mean all pupils make at least good progress. However, the quality of the work in history, geography and religious education does not always reach the high levels found in the core subjects because pupils do not transfer their skills sufficiently. Their work in art and design is of high quality and is the result of some clever and imaginative activities, often involving the environment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding because the school takes such care over pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Non-religious spiritual elements have a strong focus. This was evident when younger pupils were able to observe a hedgehog while watching birds from the school's hide. Taking part in a wide range of community activities, such as the well dressing and maypole dancing in Wakes week, adds to their excellent contribution to the community. This is supported by the parent who wrote that the school is 'vibrant and enthusiastic and integrates well with the village.' The school council and eco-committee also enable the pupils' voice to have an important say in improvements made to the school. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well and pupils are aware of how to keep themselves fit. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe, including while using the internet. Behaviour is often excellent in lessons but just occasionally when supervision is less direct, some pupils' play can get a little too boisterous. The good learning habits pupils develop, alongside their high standards, strongly support their preparation for future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has a very small team of staff who work and plan well together for the benefit of the pupils and this adds to the effective learning observed. The teaching assistants have an important role in lessons, especially for the youngest children or those who find learning more difficult. Where the teaching is outstanding, lessons are pacy and interventions by staff move learning on well. The work is challenging and expectations are high. The way staff are deployed ensures pupils are grouped effectively and this supports their learning well. When the teaching is less effective, the pace is slower and questions asked do not develop pupils' thinking skills sufficiently. Pupils say how well they think teachers and other staff help them learn. This is often supported by the high quality work seen in books and by the marking of pupils' work. Some parents feel older pupils would benefit from more homework and the school agrees this is an area that could be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched through a wide range of visits and visitors. In particular, the use of the local community and the links with a school in a nearby city and in Martinique, are helping extend pupils' horizons well and teach them about how others live. Good modern foreign language provision is helping pupils in Key Stage 1 learn German while those in Key Stage 2 learn French. There are occasional links made between subjects, such as that evident when older pupils used their literacy skills to create myths based on the Ancient Greeks. However, these links are not fully developed and the school is aware of the need to create a more meaningful curriculum so that topics help pupils use their excellent basic skills with more purpose. In addition, the school has not yet capitalised on the opportunity to develop its outdoor areas into an outstandingly productive, exciting and imaginative learning resource.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care in the school is very strong because staff know the children and their families so well. Individual needs are well met and most procedures are good. However, the school does not record first aid incidents in sufficient detail and although there are good risk assessments for off-site activities, not enough is done regarding on-site assessments especially for activities in the woodland area. Pupils say there is no bullying but if any did occur they are confident the adults in school would deal with it. The school tracks pupils' progress in depth on an individual level and the setting of targets, especially in literacy, has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve and to reach the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Although the overall leadership and management are good, the leadership demonstrated by the headteacher since her appointment has been outstanding. She has a clear vision of where the school is going and how provision can be improved even further. The staff team are providing good support although recent changes to staffing have meant the monitoring of the success of the teaching and learning in different subjects has been underdeveloped. Good quality and well advanced plans are already in hand to address this issue. The work done locally, and the national and global links in place, support the school's good promotion of community cohesion. The school has put in place a system for assessing the impact of this work on pupils' understanding. The governing body provides good support for the school and good capacity to improve is evident from the very strong improvements made since the last inspection.

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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	2
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**

30 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Litton Primary School, Litton, Derbyshire, SK17 8QU

I want to thank you for the way you made us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, and especially talking to those of you we met with or who we sat with for lunch.

We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school where you learn many new things, make good progress and reach some very high standards in your reading, writing, mathematics and science. You also produce some beautiful artwork. We especially liked the weaving you did after a recent visit to an outdoor centre. However, you do not take as much care or learn as much in history, geography or religious education.

You make sure you are at school as much as you can be and you behave very well in lessons. Some of you could be a bit more careful with the equipment you have to play with at lunchtimes! You have a lovely building but you are even more fortunate with the environment in which the school is set. I know the staff want to make even more use of them in the future and we think they will prove a fantastic resource, as long as the school ensures you are all kept safe when you use the woods and the pond.

You are lucky to have such an excellent headteacher who, together with the other adults, is very keen to make your school even better. We have made two suggestions for the school to help your learning be even better than it is. These are:

- to use the outdoors even more and help you use your good skills in reading, writing and numeracy in other subjects, and
- for the staff to spend more time checking on the success of the school's work so they are sure what works well and what can be improved.

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Litton and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector