

Linchfield Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120499
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327295
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Cousins

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	388
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	Mrs Sally Schelpe
Headteacher	Mr St John Burkett
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Crowson Way Deeping St James Lincolnshire PE6 8EY
Telephone number	01778347450
Fax number	01778341862

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school near Peterborough. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; these include speech and language difficulties and social and emotional difficulties. Pupils enter school with expected levels of attainment. Virtually all children are of White British heritage. The school has achieved Sports Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Eco Award Bronze Awards.

The pre-school childcare on the school site was inspected at the same time as the school. It is not managed by the school and so findings are reported separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Linchfield Community School gives its pupils a satisfactory primary education and is improving. One parent summed the school up by saying, 'I feel the school creates a warm and friendly environment and children are encouraged to be polite and helpful.' Pupils from all backgrounds and abilities are included effectively in school life. This is because the school's leadership welcomes all pupils genuinely. Pupils are happy in school because a good partnership exists between parents, outside agencies and staff. The majority of parents who returned a questionnaire were very positive about the school and their child's enjoyment of school life. They put this down to the good care and support their children receive from all staff.

The school's leadership places a high priority on developing links with local people and enterprises. As a result, pupils' contribution to the community is effective. Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour is outstanding because staff guide them thoughtfully but firmly. They adopt healthy lifestyles outstandingly well. Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about the value of minerals and vitamins in a range of foods. Many take part in physical exercise activities in and outside school. For example, all pupils take part in the 'Five Mile Club', which develops their fitness levels and last year some pupils trained and ran an impressive number of miles. Pupils understand very well how to keep themselves safe, for instance, when using the internet, due to thoughtful tuition from staff. Pupils keep themselves safe when out walking because the school successfully encourages them to wear reflectors. Pupils enjoy a good range of activities, which give a sound emphasis on developing their basic skills. These include special days where pupils immerse themselves in topics that add interest and relevance to their learning.

The school's leadership has started to monitor the pupils' progress and attainment more carefully using a revised assessment system. This ensures that any underachieving pupils are identified early. Pupils make sound progress because teaching is satisfactory. However, pupils do not make consistently good progress in all year groups, mainly because they do not rigorously learn to apply their basic skills. Teachers use practical activities well and so pupils learn through a rich variety of approaches. Assessment is not always used successfully to guide teaching and so a few of the pupils are not fully challenged, the ends of lessons are not consistently used to evaluate their attainment and some pupils are not totally clear about how to reach the next level of skill. Children make a sound start to their education in Reception. This is the result of staff using the inside and outside learning areas successfully. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Overall standards in Year 6 are average and are strongest in English.

Good leadership from the senior team, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, are driving improvements. Satisfactory management has brought about improvements since the last inspection. For example, pupils have better opportunities to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. This is because new resources have been purchased and a programme of study is in use, which promotes the pupils' skills successfully. Governors work well with staff and challenge the school suitably. Self-evaluation is used appropriately and so the school is in a sound position to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception classes. Children enter the school with broadly expected levels of expertise in literacy and calculation. They make reasonable progress and so standards are average by the start of Year 1. The children develop their basic skills appropriately because staff use practical teaching methods well. Children learn to use language to express their own thinking because the staff are skilful in asking probing questions. Children learn satisfactorily to recognise and say letter sounds but there is not a highly structured approach to teaching this. This means that children do not always use their knowledge of letter sounds effectively. Staff assessments regularly highlight what children can do and record effectively the next steps they could take to improve. The starting point of each child is assessed carefully and individual achievement is beginning to be tracked more rigorously.

The children's personal development is good and their behaviour is outstanding because all adults ensure that the welfare of each individual is supported well. For instance, two members of staff have completed training in first aid for children in their early years. Children happily share equipment and work cooperatively due to the thoughtful way that staff have organised the resources. For example, children wait for their turn and help each other effectively to describe the types of flavours they can taste in jam, lemon juice and pancakes. The leadership of this stage of education is good. Satisfactory management has improved the use of the outside area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils progress well by ensuring that they learn to apply their basic skills consistently from year to year.
- Ensure that assessment is used more effectively so that pupils are challenged fully in all lessons and understand how to reach their next level of skill.
- Improve the use of the end of lessons to evaluate the levels of attainment of each group of pupils.

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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily from their average starting point to the end of Year 2. Consequently, standards are average by Year 2 in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Pupils continue to make sound progress in Years 3 to 6 and so standards are average by the time they leave the school. The school recognises that pupils' progress could be better. Standards have been at least average over the last three years. Boys and girls make progress at a similar rate. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and so they achieve appropriately. Pupils that are more able make adequate progress given their starting points because of the sound quality of support from staff. In the present Year 6, an expected proportion of pupils is working at above average levels of attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop good social skills because the school places such a high priority on the promotion of respect and working together well as a team. They form effective relationships with adults because staff give them positive feedback about their behaviour and work. For example, pupils proudly received awards in an achievement assembly due to the thoughtful ways staff enhance their self-esteem. Pupils behave extremely well due to the staffs' consistent guidance. They are encouraged effectively to try new activities, which makes them feel positive about themselves. The school council successfully enables pupils to offer ideas to improve school life. Last year it was involved in getting more playground equipment for pupils to use at break times. Pupils have really positive attitudes to learning, concentrate efficiently and the vast majority attend well. Pupils' soundly develop basic skills and effective personal qualities equip them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Sound teaching is a major reason why pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of their learning. Teachers work thoughtfully to make their lessons fun. Strong features of teaching include the successful use of practical teaching methods to ensure that pupils learn to think deeply about their learning. In one good lesson seen, the Year 3 pupils were encouraged to suggest how others could develop their work because questions such as 'How can we make it better?' were used well. ICT is used successfully to extend these pupils learning and so they use their literacy skills suitably, for example, when they create a presentation of their story, adding pictures and animations. Assessment satisfactorily informs lesson planning. Although lesson planning is detailed, in practice teachers do not always challenge pupils fully. For example, occasionally, staff are not clear about what proportion of their class are working at above average standards because planning does not consistently identify them. The ends of the sessions are not always used well enough to evaluate what each group has learned and so occasionally, those who have not understood the objectives are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A high emphasis is placed on daily literacy and numeracy sessions. Regular science sessions develop the pupils' understanding suitably through investigative activities. Pupils' ICT skills are promoted effectively through weekly teaching sessions and other opportunities to use their skills in many areas of learning. Provision for the gifted and talented is improving effectively; parents report that they appreciate the extra provision for these pupils. The pupils thoroughly enjoy all the exciting projects planned for them. They talk about artwork they have enjoyed doing such as making masks and puppets where they successfully developed their creative skills. The pupils' personal, social and emotional development is supported well through class and group discussion sessions. Pupils celebrate festivals such as 'Pancake Day' with races as well as learning about the Christian beliefs linked to this time of year because religious education topics are incorporated effectively into school planning. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements successfully. Topics prepare pupils satisfactorily for life in our multicultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

'All staff (teaching and non-teaching) are very supportive,' was one parent's comment. Inspectors agree that pupils and parents receive a high level of care from staff and this is a significant strength of the school. From the moment they enter the Reception classes, pupils' pastoral needs are met well. Through discussions with parents, the staff quickly get to know pupils' interests. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively, with good use made of individual education plans and so they progress as well as their peers. Skilled teaching assistants astutely support teachers with pupils who find learning more difficult and so all achieve well in their personal development. Transition to secondary school is very well organised. All pupils spoken to said they felt safe in school because staff are readily accessible. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and all staff had child protection training last year. A new system tracks pupils' progress satisfactorily. Their achievement is monitored on a termly basis and so targets for their attainment are reviewed regularly. Feedback for pupils, both oral and written, does not consistently tell them what they have done well and could do to improve. Pupils are not always clear about how to reach the next level of attainment and skill.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior leadership team is always looking for ways to improve the school. Subject leaders and staff have undertaken many valuable training courses, which have allowed them to introduce new ways of structuring learning and skills development. Senior leaders monitor pupils' attainment regularly and satisfactorily analyse their progress with class teachers. Pupils have equal opportunities to learn: this is promoted well because each pupil is monitored individually. The school works well to encourage a sense of cohesion in the school and wider community. For example, at Christmas, pupils sang successfully for older people and the school orchestra includes people from the local community. Recently, pupils took part in a hockey tournament involving many local schools. Pupils also raise money for national charities and support global issues such as recycling and saving natural resources. The school has evaluated all aspects of community cohesion and developing links with schools in England and abroad helps deepen pupils' understanding of our multicultural world. Governance is sound and supports the school well and governors are beginning to challenge the school's leadership. They gain an appropriate knowledge of the school by coming in regularly and meeting with senior leaders. A strong team spirit unites the school's leadership and governors.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	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	3
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	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

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

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Linchfield Community School

Thank you for helping us to find out about your school. We enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a happy and friendly school. Positive things about your school include:

- you make satisfactory progress in your work
- you concentrate and behave very well in school
- you really enjoy all the things you do at school
- your headteacher and senior teachers have very good ideas about ways to improve the school
- teaching is satisfactory and the staff work hard to make sessions interesting
- a good partnership is in place between the school, your parents and others
- staff care for you well and listen to you thoughtfully.

We have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. The most important matters are to:

- make sure that you progress well every year by ensuring that you learn to apply your basic skills
- ensure assessment is used more effectively so that all of you are challenged in lessons and know how to reach the next level of skill in your work
- make sure that the ends of lessons are used effectively to assess what you have learnt.

Continue to listen carefully to staff comments, come to school everyday and enjoy all the super things you are learning at Linchfield Community School.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector