

Lansdowne Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124039
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328035
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	212
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	48
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jude Lloyd
Headteacher	Jackie Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Goodman Street Burton-on-Trent DE14 2RE
Telephone number	01283 239141
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) and serves an area of high social deprivation. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free meals is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average and many are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that seen nationally although few have a statement of special educational need.

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 some outstanding features and provides pupils with a stimulating and very safe environment in which to learn. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school and rightly pleased with the education their children experience. The following parental comment is typical of many: 'My children are very happy in school and even want to go when they are ill.'

The key to the school's success is good leadership and management. The headteacher provides well focused educational direction and has a clear vision for school improvement. All involved in the life of the school share this vision and a strong team ethos is evident. Senior leaders check the school's provision carefully and act quickly to introduce strategies for improvement when required. However, they do not rigorously evaluate the impact of some of these strategies and so do not know the extent to which they are proving successful. Leaders at all levels very effectively promote the well-being of pupils and consequently the care and support provided for pupils is outstanding. All pupils are cherished as unique individuals and staff are fully committed to ensuring their health and safety. Pupils greatly appreciate this and they say they feel safe and secure in school.

Pupils' achievement is good. They enter the Nursery with skill levels that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and social skills. They make good progress throughout the school because of good quality teaching and learning. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Though progress is checked regularly, the school lacks a rigorous system for assessing children's attainment on starting school. This limits its ability to measure accurately the value added to individual pupils' skills as they pass through the school. Pupils enjoy lessons and have good attitudes toward learning, which makes a positive contribution to the progress they make. Teachers give pupils motivating activities that capture and maintain their interest. Lessons are usually planned well to meet individual pupils' needs, but occasionally the activities provided lack sufficient challenge and limit the progress made. This is especially the case for pupils who are more able. The effective bi-lingual support provided for pupils at an early stage of learning English is an important factor in the good progress they make. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent and lead to classrooms being calm and happy places in which to learn.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils behave in an exemplary manner and are very considerate to others. Of particular note is the way that pupils from different ethnic backgrounds get on so well together. They cooperate very well and are keen to learn about other pupils' different traditions and beliefs. This leads to a very harmonious atmosphere in and around school. The good curriculum is lively and builds well on the interests and experiences of pupils. It is effectively enriched by extra-curricular activities and links with other providers, such as the Life Education Council and Road Safety Officers.

There has been good improvement made since the last inspection. For example, pupils now use the skills they have learned in reading, writing and mathematics at the right level in other subjects. The school's track record over recent years shows there is good capacity to make any necessary improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good and leads to children making good progress across all the areas of learning. Though standards are below average on entry to Year 1, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills, children have achieved well from their low attainment on starting school. All staff are aware of the needs of children of this age and ensure they are provided with an exciting and stimulating learning environment. Activities are mainly practical and build well on children's own experiences. As a result, children of all abilities and backgrounds maintain their interest and concentrate well. Staff regularly check children's progress, but the information gained is not always used effectively to set work that is sufficiently challenging. A high priority is placed on children's personal development, as many enter school with low social skills. As a result, this aspect of children's development is outstanding. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and children respond by behaving very well. They really enjoy their activities and are keen to do well. Staff promote children's welfare in an outstanding manner and this is much appreciated by parents. Induction procedures are good, with home visits being used well to help children settle quickly when they start school. Leadership is good and has correctly identified the need to establish a sharper assessment of individual children's attainment on entry, so their progress can be measured more accurately.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve lesson planning to challenge pupils more effectively, especially those who are more able.
- Evaluate more rigorously the effect of strategies put into place to bring about improvement.
- Thoroughly check children's attainment on entering Nursery so their progress can be measured more accurately.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Though pupils achieve well and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2, leaders are not complacent and are striving to improve pupils' skills further. A key area for development is pupils' skills in writing. Pupils tend to write as they speak and do not always use vocabulary relevant for different styles of writing. The school is exploring ways of helping pupils to widen their vocabulary and to choose words more carefully when writing for different purposes. Pupils' numeracy skills are enhanced by activities being mainly practical, which successfully helps them understand the different ideas being taught. Pupils make good progress in science because of the many opportunities to be involved in practical scientific investigations. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English achieve well because of the well targeted extra support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are very friendly, polite and clearly know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils show a great deal of enjoyment in coming to school and are very willing to help others. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is only satisfactory because some parents do not see the value of ensuring their children attend regularly. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community,

such as taking responsibility as a member of the school council. They also contribute very well to the local community, as is shown by their fundraising for local charities. They are adopting healthy lifestyles in an outstanding manner. Even the youngest children take regular exercise and know the importance of eating healthily. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to stay safe, as is seen in the responsible way they move in and around school. They are well prepared for the move to the junior school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are eager to do well and show positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully during the introduction to lessons and so are clear about what they are expected to learn and how to set about their work. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond positively to this. As a result, there is minimal disruption to the flow of lessons and pupils have a high work rate. Staff encourage pupils to find out and investigate for themselves. This makes a good contribution to pupils' development as independent learners. Occasionally, the progress that pupils make is hindered because the work they are given does not stretch them sufficiently. This is particularly so for pupils who are more able. Teaching assistants provide valuable extra support to all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned carefully to have a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal, social and emotional development. This is important, as many pupils start school with low social skills. As a result, pupils' confidence and self-esteem blossoms and their personal development is outstanding. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including music, sport, cooking, circus skills and French, effectively extends the curriculum. All pupils are provided with opportunities for free choice time each day and this develops their independent learning skills well. The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. It challenges pupils to think creatively, such as when making the Star of David in a mathematics problem-solving activity by using geoboard and elastic bands. Curriculum planning is not always successful in effectively challenging pupils, especially the more able. The good quality outside areas for children in the EYFS are used effectively to promote their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school places a very strong emphasis on ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Child protection arrangements are comprehensive, with all staff knowing the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Risk assessments are very rigorous for activities in and around school and on visits. The school has excellent links with a variety of outside agencies. These ensure that extra support is readily available for individual pupils when required. Of particular note is the very good bilingual support provided for those pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school thoroughly checks the progress that pupils make and so has a clear picture of how well they are doing and what further guidance they need.

The school is successfully developing pupils' skills in understanding for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the school to identify and prioritise areas for development. Leaders then quickly take action to bring about improvement, as is seen in the strategies introduced to improve pupils' skills in writing in English and calculation skills in mathematics. However, checking to see if such strategies are proving successful is not always rigorous enough and this restricts leaders having a full picture of school improvement. Opportunities for staff to develop their professional expertise are good. These are linked well to staff personal needs and to whole-school priorities. Leaders work effectively to establish strong links between outside services and other organisations to promote and enhance learning. They also successfully develop the school community by promoting good relationships between pupils from different backgrounds. The school effectively engages with the local community through such activities as home visits and by organising a variety of family learning opportunities. Governors support the school well and are involved fully in helping it improve.

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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?	1
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?	1
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	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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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?	1

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**

22 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Lansdowne Infants' School, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 2RE

We really liked coming to your school and enjoyed watching the exciting things you do. Your school is good in many ways and some things about it are super. You make good progress and reach standards that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

What we found out about your school

- It is a very friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- You behave very well and are very kind to others.
- The adults give you lots of exciting things to do and make learning fun.
- You enjoy coming to school very much and are keen to learn.
- Parents are very pleased with the excellent way adults look after you and care for you every day.
- Anyone who needs extra help with their work is always given it.
- You are good at making choices for yourselves and sticking at your work until it is finished.
- Adults work hard to help you to be ready to go to your next school.

To make your school even better, I have asked the adults who run it to:

- make sure you are always given work that makes you think hard, especially those of you who find work easy
- always check carefully if the changes they make are helping you to improve your work
- make sure they are clear about what you know and can do when you start school so they can check how well you make progress.

You can help the school by always trying your hardest in all your work. All of you are a credit to your school.

All my best wishes for the future and I hope you continue enjoying school and being kind and friendly toward others.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector