

Lakenheath Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124539
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328160
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Palmer
Headteacher	Mrs N M Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 June 2006
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at samples of pupils' work, assessment data, safeguarding documents, minutes of governing body meetings and headteacher's reports to the governing body. Twenty four parents' questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- The achievement of different groups in the school, particularly boys and girls, Year 2 pupils in different classes and pupils joining the school at times other than at the start of Reception.
- How the school promotes pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.
- The quality of teaching and learning to ensure it is consistent throughout the school to enable all pupils to make sufficient progress.
- The governing body's plans to develop its role in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance.

Information about the school

Lakenheath Primary is about the same size as many other primary schools. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in a foundation unit. Children start school at the beginning of the Reception Year, initially part time. They attend full time from the beginning of the term in which they are five. A significant number of children transfer elsewhere at the end of the Reception Year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are similar to the picture found nationally. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and only a small number are at an early stage of acquiring English. A significant number of pupils come from United States Air Force families stationed at nearby RAF bases. The school has gained the Activemark, recognising its contribution to pupils' physical education. The school is subject to reorganisation and under the local authority plans will become a 4–11 primary school by 2012. A new headteacher has been appointed and will join the staff in September 2009.

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

This school has improved significantly since its last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning, the use of assessment, the curriculum and leadership and management have improved and are all now good. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in their learning and standards at the end of Year 4 are better than they were three years ago when the school was last inspected. These improvements are the result of the effective actions, based on accurate and detailed self-evaluation, taken by senior leaders. They clearly demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' good personal development plays a significant part in their good achievement. They have positive attitudes to learning and relate well to each other, cooperating effectively in lessons when working alongside each other. Pupils of all abilities, ages and backgrounds mix well. However, pupils' awareness of the lives and cultures of people beyond their own immediate vicinity and experiences is limited. This impedes their cultural development and the extent to which the school promotes community cohesion. Pupils find school interesting and they enjoy being there. This is because teachers are effective in engaging their interest. The well developed curriculum makes this possible, with meaningful links between subjects ensuring learning has a purpose.

Members of the staff team work well together. The headteacher and senior leaders provide strong leadership and evaluate the school's performance effectively, identifying what the school does well and where there needs to be improvement. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there is a very clear vision for the next steps, documented in the good quality school improvement plan. The governing body's role in monitoring the school's performance and holding key personnel to account is not as well developed. There are a significant number of newly appointed governors and the governing body is at a point where it needs to identify how it can best support and challenge the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by:
 - evaluating the skills, knowledge and understanding of individual governors and identifying training needs
 - providing appropriate training for governors
 - preparing a strategic plan to support and challenge the work of the school and monitor its performance
 - devising procedures for supporting the induction of the new headteacher.

- Develop and implement an effective strategy to improve pupils' cultural understanding and promote cultural diversity by:
 - analysing the school's religious, ethnic and socio-economic context
 - preparing and implementing an action plan to enable pupils to engage more frequently with a range of community groups, beyond the school and the immediate community
 - evaluating the impact of the school's work to promote cultural diversity and community cohesion on a regular basis.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school and find lessons interesting. Because the learning of skills is set into context, they recognise there is a purpose to what they are doing. Consequently, they engage enthusiastically in learning and are keen to do well. Pupils entering the school in either Reception or the start of Year 1 make good progress from their low starting points. Because the quality of learning is good, pupils progress well and by the end of Year 2, standards match the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to perform well in lessons and by the end of Year 4 attainment is above that expected for this age. The good quality in writing seen in literacy lessons is reflected in other subjects. An examination of pupils' work in topics that include history, geography and science for example, show pupils transfer these skills well into other subjects. Similarly, their good information and communication technology (ICT) skills add a quality to the work produced across the curriculum. Good progress is made by all groups of pupils.

Behaviour in lessons and around school is good and pupils feel safe because they behave considerately towards each other. Older pupils manage their own behaviour well. Only good or better behaviour was seen during lessons and at other times around school. Although the attendance of the vast majority of pupils is very good, overall attendance is depressed by the persistent absence of a few pupils and some extended visits overseas.

Pupils have good moral and social development and this can be seen in the social harmony that pervades the school and the calm environment in which pupils learn. They appreciate others' feelings and act accordingly. However, their understanding of a wider range of cultures is less well developed. Pupils appreciate the

characteristics of a healthy lifestyle. They are able to make wise choices in relation to their diet. The school council has, in the past, organised a healthy lunchbox competition to encourage those pupils who bring their own lunch to eat healthily. This has been generally effective. Pupils engage in the wide range of physical activities, both within and beyond the curriculum. They are able to sustain vigorous movement as seen in the ‘wake up and shake up’ sessions held regularly for the whole school.

There are many opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life. Younger pupils particularly value the play leaders and say they help them feel safe in school, particularly when the leaders organise games for them to play at lunchtimes. Pupils are involved in the local community as well. They visit village residents, play host to them at Christmas performances and are involved in such initiatives as cleaning up the village or developing the local nature reserve. Pupils have had links with the local area’s newspaper including the writing of articles. These and other entrepreneurial activities through the school’s involvement in the Young Enterprise Scheme, combined with good progress in building core skills, mean that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ attainment ¹	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?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils’ attendance ¹	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?	3

How effective is the provision?

In the great majority of lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was good or better. Teachers use assessment data well to ensure that the work set matches each individual pupil’s needs well. Their expectations of what pupils can do are consistently high. Lessons are planned well and conducted at a brisk pace, with pupils actively involved in answering well-directed questions, taking part in group work or developing and practising the skills they have learned. Consequently the

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

pace of learning is brisk. Assessment information is also used well to identify pupils in danger of not achieving as well as they might. Skilled teaching assistants then provide effective support for pupils who need it. Pupils are involved in assessing their own learning at the end of lessons and the school is keen to develop this aspect of pupils' contribution to planning their own learning further.

In the few less successful lessons, there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to do things for themselves. Occasionally the expectations of what pupils can do are too high and there is insufficient consolidation before pupils are moved on in their learning.

Lessons are based on topics which provide opportunities for teachers to link subjects meaningfully and for them to plan the learning of core skills across a range of subjects. Literacy, numeracy and computer skills are developed in a range of subjects such as history, geography and science and effectively enrich learning in these subjects. The curriculum is enriched through subject themed days or weeks, a wide range of visits and visitors and the weekly enrichment hour during which pupils of different ages engage in a range of mostly practical activities. Strong emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship support their personal development well. Links with other organisations such as local newspapers and Young Enterprise, participation in Forest Schools, Mantle of the Expert all make learning interesting. The school takes good care of all pupils, whatever their specific needs might be and pays special attention to pupils' emotional well-being. This support is having a positive impact on pupils' concentration and learning.

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 headteacher has created a strong sense of teamwork, with all staff contributing to the success of the school. Rigorous monitoring of the school's performance, both in terms of what it provides and how well pupils are learning has resulted in a shared drive for improvement. The leadership of the school ensures that teachers and teaching assistants have the skills required to meet each pupil's needs effectively. The governing body and senior leaders have ensured that statutory responsibilities, including procedures to safeguard pupils, are met.

All teaching staff have a meaningful role in planning for improvement. The senior leadership team rigorously monitors pupils' progress and use this information to set challenging targets for all groups of pupils. This means that all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. Subject leaders monitor the outcomes in their own subjects and prepare action plans detailing the next steps for development. These plans are

considered seriously when discussing the main priorities for school improvement. Additionally, the school takes into account the views of parents and acts upon their findings. The school travel plan and the provision of shelters are two examples where parents' views have influenced decisions. The school extends opportunities for parents to learn how to help their children's learning at home through workshops. These have had a limited response from parents, although a number of parents accept the invitation to help settle their young children into Reception and Years 1 and 2 in the mornings. This is much appreciated by parents, the school and children. The school is aware that its work to promote community cohesion is at an early stage of development. School leaders reach out to the local and parent community well, and have good links with these groups and other schools that effectively enrich the education the school offers.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skills and attainments that are below the level normally expected for children of this age. All groups of children make good progress through their Reception Year and meet the nationally expected levels for the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children quickly learn to work and play in harmony and know how to keep themselves and others safe when involved in a wide range of learning activities. Children's behaviour is managed effectively. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision promotes children's learning and well-being effectively.

The range of learning opportunities is good with particularly effective use made of the outdoor environment. Both inside and outdoor areas are well equipped and provide children with a good balance of opportunities to learn. Adults ensure there is also a good balance between learning directed by adults and opportunities for children to choose their own activities. There is a good emphasis on encouraging children to learn through play. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Staff are competent and able to work on their own initiative, yet still within a strong level of teamwork. Children's progress is carefully

monitored and planned activities mostly build well on past 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

Most parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were enthusiastic in their support of the school. They expressed satisfaction in the way the school cares for their children and the quality of education provided. One or two expressed concerns about aspects of lunchtime supervision and the headteacher has been informed of these matters.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lakenheath Community 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 24 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 167 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	11	11	2	0

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.

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Lakenheath Community Primary School, Lakenheath, IP27 9DU.

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and visiting lessons. We particularly valued the chances we had to speak to you to find out what you think about your school.

You go to a good school. All the staff work well together to provide you with a good quality education. Teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care shown for you are all effective. You make good progress in lessons at all stages of the school. By the end of Year 4, you reach standards in your work that are above those expected for your age. You are well prepared to go on to the next stages of your education.

You help a great deal by behaving well, taking responsibility seriously and trying hard to do your best. We were impressed by how you are all willing to have a go, however difficult the task. We were also very pleased by the sensible way in which you learn, make friends and care about each other. We noticed the impressive level of manners and courtesy shown to us by all pupils. You help to make others feel safe in school and enjoy being there. Those of you we spoke to enjoy school very much and find it interesting.

Adults in your school are always looking for ways to improve the school. We have asked staff and governors to look at:

- helping you understand how people in other parts of the world live and what makes us and other people the way we are
- ways in which governors can play a greater role in helping the school improve further.

We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours faithfully,
David Speakman
Lead Inspector

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