

Lighthorne Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125530
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	328351
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Blackburn
Headteacher (acting)	Janet Paget
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2006
School address	Stratford Road Lighthorne Heath Leamington Spa CV33 9TW
Telephone number	01926 640326
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and representatives of the local authority. The inspector also observed the school's work and scrutinised a wide range of documentation including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation records, local authority review documentation, assessment records, individual educational plans, minutes of meetings and the termly reports of the school improvement partner. The responses from the 34 parents' questionnaires were also analysed.

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

- the achievement of different groups of pupils, especially the more able, to determine if assessment information is used well enough to maximise progress
- the effectiveness of strategies to raise attainment in writing throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how the school is improving reading attainment especially in Key Stage 1
- how well pupils are developing their learning skills and their involvement in knowing how to improve their work
- how the leadership team is developing its skills of evaluation and using information to improve achievement.

Information about the school

In this very small village school, the vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Mobility is high, more pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual starting or leaving points. Pupils are taught in four mixed-year group classes; the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. There is an acting headteacher in post, appointed in September 2008. The substantive headteacher, following a time of secondment to another school, has very recently resigned. The school has gained a number of national awards which include Healthy Schools status and Activemark.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

4

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' learning and progress, the quality of teaching and use of assessment, and pupils' understanding of community cohesion.

Even though overall effectiveness is inadequate, there has been strong improvement over recent months. This is a result of the leadership of the acting headteacher who in a very short time has successfully gained the trust of the majority of staff and governors, focusing them firmly on the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school improvement plan is a useful tool to drive the school forward. The capacity to improve is satisfactory, as the leadership has a clear vision of what it is necessary to do to improve and actions implemented so far have had success. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage the environment is much improved and children's early writing skills are improving. The recently introduced achievement tracking and target setting system is providing teachers with more precise information about pupils' learning, although there remain concerns about the consistent use of this information and its accuracy, especially in writing. However, as a result of a focus on the teaching of reading, progress is now satisfactory throughout the school, with more pupils working at expected levels than in the past. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has much improved through revised programmes of work and closer communication with parents.

However, the standards overall are below average and despite some improvement, pupils' progress remains too variable. This is because the quality of teaching is not good enough and is quite fragile. The lessons seen during the inspection varied from inadequate to satisfactory. There is, however a developing sense of teamwork and most teachers are keen to improve their work. They are trying hard to improve planning and their understanding of what is meant by good learning, as they are becoming more accountable for their pupils' progress. More regular classroom observations mean teachers are receiving useful feedback about their practice. Teachers are trying hard to involve pupils in knowing how to improve their work through the sharing of learning targets and the marking of work. As yet, this guidance is not yet specific enough to enable pupils to evaluate for themselves why

work is good and how to make it better.

Although achievement is not good enough, pupils are attentive, enjoy their work and try hard to succeed. They attend school regularly and attendance is above average. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe, knowing the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking. They feel safe within school, confident that any issues will be dealt with fairly by adults. They speak knowledgably about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, including eating sensibly and taking regular exercise. The pupils' contribution to the school and local community is satisfactory but they do not have sufficient opportunities to work with others of different faiths, ethnicities and cultures within the United Kingdom. The leadership does not have a clear strategy for ensuring this aspect of pupils' development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Check all pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - developing secure tracking systems that accurately show progress over time
 - setting challenging targets for all pupils that reflect their capabilities
 - ensuring staff are held accountable for their pupils' progress
 - the leadership team regularly monitoring pupils' progress, taking action if there is evidence of underachievement.

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently satisfactory or better by:
 - ensuring assessment information is accurate, especially in writing
 - enabling teachers to use this information competently to plan next steps of learning
 - making sure all teachers are clear about the difference between the activities pupils do, and the learning expected of them
 - providing regular quality feedback to teachers about how to improve their practice.

- Develop pupils' responsibility in knowing how to improve their work by:
 - providing pupils with clear guidance about how they can make their work better
 - consistently linking the marking of work to the intended learning of the lesson
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to assess for themselves how well they are doing.

- Develop a strategy for community cohesion by:
 - immediately carrying out an audit of the school's religious, ethnic and socio-economic context
 - devising an effective strategy, based on this audit, to develop opportunities for pupils to work with different communities within the local, United Kingdom and global communities
 - providing evidence of the impact of the school's work on pupils' development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Analysis of current assessment information and pupils' work indicates that attainment in Year 6 is below average, as in previous years. There has been a decline in attainment in Year 2 during the last three years and it is now below average. Writing is the weakest area of attainment, as seen in pupils' books, and more able pupils do not reach high enough standards. However, as a result of recent improvements in the tracking of pupils' progress, the uneven learning and progress evident in the past is slowly improving. Most teachers are starting to use the information about what pupils know and can do to plan work that is starting to meet the needs of pupils, especially the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Progress is now satisfactory in reading throughout the school as a result of a focus on the teaching of basic reading skills. However, it is early days and as yet there has been insufficient time to overcome the legacy of underachievement.

Despite work not being consistently matched well enough to their learning needs and achievement, pupils work hard. They want to learn and do their best to complete their tasks. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good, but there are a small minority who show challenging behaviour which occasionally disrupts the learning of others. However, this is managed well, and the use of the 'Support Centre' provides a valuable resource to support these pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and there are few instances of bullying. They value their friends and as one pupil commented, 'When you lose a friend it is like losing a part of your life.' Pupils want to help others. They are enthusiastic about the recently formed school council and think it is good that they will be able to make suggestions about school improvement. Helping to decide upon the new behaviour policy was something they really appreciated. Pupils' satisfactory basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, alongside their personal qualities, means they are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	4
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	4
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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

What is the extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3
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How effective is the provision?

During the inspection, although satisfactory features were seen in all lessons, no good lessons were seen and some inadequate teaching was observed. While teachers now have a better idea of what they need to plan for, some of them are finding it difficult to identify next steps of learning and exactly what it is they need to teach to ensure the progress of all pupils. This was evident in some classes where units of work related to the age of pupils but not their ability levels were used, for example, in mathematics. In a writing lesson, however, the teacher had different expectations for each group of pupils when they were developing their skills of persuasive writing. This meant all pupils made satisfactory progress in this lesson. Teaching assistants generally support the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities satisfactorily, ensuring they take part in class activities. Teachers’ skills in making accurate assessment of pupils’ abilities, although improving is not secure, especially in writing.

Pupils are becoming more involved in knowing how to improve their work and they say that the recently introduced system of sharing targets with them in writing and mathematics is useful. Scrutiny of their work shows that marking has improved over recent months, providing pupils with information about progress towards intended learning. However, guidance is not yet specific enough to explain to pupils why or how to improve further. The curriculum, although improving does not consistently meet the range of pupils’ needs. The reading curriculum is better matched to pupils’ needs as shown by improving progress, but provision in mathematics and writing does not match this. There are strengths in other subjects, especially in art and design as confirmed by good quality art work seen in the hall, depicting major world religions. Extra-curricular activities are varied, including homework, football and story clubs. Pupils enjoy these opportunities and the take-up rate is good.

Although the care, guidance and support of pupils is important to all in the school, it is only recently that an accurate register has been put in place to distinguish between those pupils who are in need of academic support, and those who are vulnerable in relation to their personal and social development. Now the school is better able to monitor more carefully the guidance given to these pupils. Even so, relationships are positive throughout and pupils who are vulnerable, for example those with behaviour problems, are managed sensitively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has good determination to drive this school forward. Upon her appointment in September, she quickly identified pupils' learning and progress was not good enough. She then involved the local authority who confirmed her evaluations were accurate and well founded. Although staff initially found it hard to make adjustments to their practice, the acting headteacher has been successful in communicating the need to make rapid improvement. Now almost all staff are on board and share the same resolve to improve. Important systems have been established, such as a tracking and target-setting, pupil progress meetings and regular evaluations of teaching and learning. The school improvement plan is a sharply focused document which clearly identifies what must be achieved in a tightly agreed time frame. Governors are more aware of their responsibilities and are developing their role of holding the school to account. For example, the regular meetings of the standards and performance committee means governors are learning more about pupils' progress enabling them to ask the right questions about provision. However, holding staff accountable for pupils' progress is not firmly established. The school satisfactorily promotes equality and tackles discrimination with pupils being treated fairly and with respect, but the use of information about pupils' performance is only developing as the leadership is building up a picture of performance over time.

Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and at the time of the inspection all safeguarding documents met government requirements. Risk assessments are carried out carefully and the school is conscientious in ensuring pupils know how to keep safe. A detailed register now ensures that the school knows which pupils are at risk and the school works closely with outside agencies to ensure their well-being. However, it is only recently that parents are becoming more actively involved in this aspect of the school's work. There is some positive work on developing an understanding of the importance of community life through the family learning partnership, the work of the Inter Cultural Support Service and different visitors to the school. However, this work is not based on a detailed audit of need and as yet there is no clear plan or evaluation strategy for ensuring community cohesion within or beyond the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4
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Early Years Foundation Stage

The outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) are satisfactory. Children enter Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy, although this varies considerably year upon year. As a result of satisfactory teaching, progress is satisfactory, although attainment in 2008 remained well below average. Since then, the staff have worked successfully to improve provision, including the learning environment. The leader of this key stage is determined to make improvements and has willingly accepted local authority advice. Staff are trying hard to raise attainment and there is a strong emphasis on developing reading and writing skills. This is having some success and early indications are that this year more children should be working at expected levels on entry to Year 1. However, in the eagerness to enable children to become more skilled in reading and writing, staff have inappropriate expectations at times of how long children should be listening to adults. There is an appropriate balance between indoor and outdoor learning and children enjoy their learning, especially when outdoors. This was evident as children excitedly made spells and changed adults into 'green frogs' in the outdoor area. Parents are pleased with how well their children settle. They say staff are friendly and approachable and observations confirm relationships between staff and children are good.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the school's work and the efforts of the staff. Comments such as 'any problems are always addressed as quickly as possible' and 'you are always welcomed with time taken to speak to you' confirm parents find the school approachable. They are especially pleased with the safeguarding arrangements and the way the school helps their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. A small number thought they would like more information about their children's progress. The acting headteacher agrees that this is an area that needs to be improved and is in the process of implementing plans to do so.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at Lighthorne Heath 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 inspector received 34 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 48 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	28	6	0	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.



11 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lighthorne Heath Primary School, Leamington Spa, CV33 9TW

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. You were really polite and friendly and helped me to learn a lot about what you do, what you enjoy and what you think you could do better. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out during my visit.

It was good to know you feel safe in school and adults look after you well. Also, I was impressed that you know so much about keeping healthy and could provide good advice about sensible foods to eat and the importance of taking regular exercise. You attend regularly and in lessons I noted that you all tried hard with your work. You gave me useful information about the dangers of smoking and taking drugs and so I know you are aware of how to keep safe. I know you are excited about the newly formed school council and I think that it is a very good idea for you to work with your teachers about how to make your school better.

However, although there are good things, I think your school is not doing as well as it should be in helping you to achieve your very best. I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to make sure that you all do as well as you can in reading, writing and mathematics. I also have suggested that your teachers use the information about what you know already, to plan work that makes all of you learn as well as you can. I think you would find it useful to have more help in knowing how you could improve your work and so I have asked your teachers to give you clear guidance when they mark your books. Finally, I know you enjoy working with each other and I think you now need more opportunities to work with communities in the United Kingdom and overseas that have pupils from other faiths, cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

I am sure you will do all you can to help all the adults that work with you make your school better. You can do this by trying as hard as you can and keep attending your school regularly.

Yours faithfully
Lois Furness
Lead inspector.

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