

Larklands Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112708
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337992
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2010
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alex Stevens
Headteacher	Helen Smith
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons and six teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work and looked at various documents including pupils' work, minutes of meetings, records of pupils' progress and the responses of 111 questionnaires from parents/carers.

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

- attendance patterns throughout the school
- the management of behaviour.

Information about the school

This is an average size infant school where most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are almost none who have English as an additional language. None are at the early stage of speaking English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The school has an average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities which cover a range of needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in a Nursery and two Reception classes. Among the awards obtained by the school are Activemark and Health Promoting School status. The headteacher took up her post in September 2009.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Larklands Infant School provides its pupils with a good education. By the end of Year 2 attainment is average in all key subjects and this represents good progress by pupils from their lower than expected starting points. Teaching is good and pupils greatly enjoy lessons as a result of good relationships and the use of exciting topics within the good curriculum. Pastoral care is good and this contributes to the pupils' view that they are safe in school. The outcomes for pupils are good including their spiritual, moral and social development. Their cultural development is only satisfactory because, although they learn about other faiths and cultures through the curriculum, they have very limited direct experience of them. The behaviour of pupils throughout the school is good. A small number of pupils do present challenge but are well managed by staff and do not have a significant effect on the learning of others. Additional strategies to support these pupils, including the very recently introduced nurture group, are being developed. Attendance has been low over recent years mainly due to a few families not ensuring their children come to school regularly. Raising attendance has been a priority of the headteacher and procedures put in place have been very effective with current attendance levels being at the national average.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a satisfactory start to children's education and is improving as new systems become established. The monitoring of children's progress is not yet fully effective at identifying the next steps in their learning.

The leadership and management of the school are good and parents and staff confirm this. Governance is satisfactory because many new members are still developing their skills and have had insufficient time to show their impact on raising standards. Leaders' self-evaluation accurately identifies the strengths and areas for development in the school. Parents greatly appreciate the revised start of day procedures which enable them to bring pupils into school and for them to get to know the staff. This has helped build a very cohesive community. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with good systems now in place to monitor progress as pupils move through the school and effective strategies introduced to improve attendance, although further work is still needed with some families. Although the school is still judged to be good, as it was at the last inspection, the systems to support teaching and the curriculum are much more secure now and this demonstrates that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of assessment systems in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help

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teachers plan more effectively for the next steps in children's learning.

- Work with parents of those pupils who do not attend regularly to help improve their attendance and enable them to make as much progress as they should.
- Improve community cohesion and pupils' cultural understanding by developing links with other schools and communities and carrying out formal evaluations of the impact of actions taken.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Achievement is good with no significant variations by pupils across the areas of the school's work. All pupils make good progress because activities are challenging, enjoyable and matched well to their range of abilities. This was seen, for example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson about the use of capital letters where short activities such as editing a piece of text were mixed in with periods of direct teaching. There is a good variety of well planned activities as was seen in a Year 1 science lesson about plant growth where pupils were encouraged to observe carefully and share their ideas. The whole afternoon had a 'buzz' about it as pupils actively engaged in work about various topics which linked subjects together - the science lesson was linked to art as pupils created pictures in the style of Van Gogh. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the extra support they get. All pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their move to junior school because of their secure key skills, including literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, supported by their good personal skills. The very few pupils who do not attend regularly do make steady progress, but their poor attendance hampers better attainment and progress.

Pupils get on well together and their behaviour is good both in and out of lessons ensuring that all pupils feel safe and can learn and enjoy school. They say any poor behaviour is dealt with very quickly. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles by eating healthy food and participating regularly in sport, reflecting the school's Health Promoting School status. They make a good contribution to the school community through the school council, by undertaking responsibility in class and around the school. They are very proud of the school and enjoy the task of welcoming visitors into the school and the classroom. Year 2 pupils were very proud and excited to invite the inspectors to their tea party which was part of their global gardens topic. They interact with the local community through activities with other local schools. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good overall but cultural awareness is relatively weaker because pupils have limited direct contact with pupils whose backgrounds are different to their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching and a good curriculum help pupils learn well in a caring environment. Teaching assistants provide good support throughout the school especially for those who find the work hard.

The curriculum caters for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The provision of a topic-based curriculum is making learning interesting and enjoyable. There is a good focus on promoting personal skills such as how to stay healthy. There is good coverage of other faiths and cultures ensuring that pupils are enabled to gain a basic understanding of the community. One Year 2 pupil confirmed this when he told the inspector 'we've been learning about cultural diversity'. There are not, however, direct links with other communities to extend this understanding. There is a good range of well attended extra-curricular clubs. Systems to allow pupils to use information technology to access and extend their school work at home are at an early stage of development.

Good procedures are in place to encourage high standards of behaviour. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, including enlisting the support of parents, but knows there is still more work required to reduce the frequent absence of a few pupils. Transition arrangements with the junior schools are good and the headteacher is gradually changing procedures as pupils move through Year 2 to match junior school procedures. The pastoral care in the school is good with all staff strongly committed to the concepts of equal opportunities and that every child matters. All aspects of care and health and safety are well addressed. There are good arrangements to support vulnerable pupils and this often extends to their families.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: 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 provides good leadership and is well supported by enthusiastic staff at all levels in her drive and vision for improving the school further. New monitoring systems are well organised and give an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's good work to promote equal opportunities and avoid discrimination ensures there is no significant underachievement by any group of pupils. Leaders are helping to make sure that attendance is rising to aid equal opportunities but there is still more to do on this for a few pupils.

Governors, many of whom are new to post, provide satisfactory governance by ensuring all statutory requirements are met and providing support and challenge to the leadership team. Leaders have developed the school as a cohesive community. Based on an initial audit they have a good understanding of the local community and are aware of what needs to be done to increase pupils' understanding of the world around them. Steps to evaluate the impact of community cohesion further afield are at an early stage of development. Safeguarding procedures are well developed and reviewed regularly. All aspects of risk assessment are very secure and the required checks on adults who work in school have been made.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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 equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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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

The headteacher is currently the interim coordinator and provides satisfactory leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She has identified areas where improvement is needed and there is already clear evidence of improved outcomes for the current Reception group. When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage their skills and abilities are below those typically seen. In recent years they have made satisfactory progress and at the end of Reception have skills still below those appropriate to their age except in personal development. The current cohort has made better progress since September 2009 and is on track to reach expected levels.

Staff work well together to ensure a secure and caring environment. There is a flexible arrangement for times of attendance in the Nursery and this is valued greatly by parents and has helped develop a good partnership with them. Start-of-day procedures are good and ensure that children are happy and feel safe. Children benefit from an exciting range of resources in good accommodation. The outdoor area is safe and secure but does not link directly to the Reception classrooms. This restricts opportunities for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas but the staff overcome these problems as well as possible and plans to modify access are in place. Learning in the classroom is linked to that experienced outdoors to reinforce the children's understanding. Children really enjoy the tasks which are designed to motivate them and stimulate their learning. Adults provide a broad range of activities to promote all areas of learning. Systems to monitor children's progress are not sufficiently developed to ensure that the next steps in their learning are clearly identified and included in the planning of lessons. This limits the effectiveness of teaching to satisfactory. There is a good balance of adult-directed activities and those that children choose for themselves. Behaviour is good. All groups of children are happy, and play and learn well together. Staff know the children well, are aware of any specific needs and all procedures to support the welfare of children are fully in place. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported in all aspects of their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

Approximately half of parents and carers expressed their views with the overwhelming majority of these being very happy with all aspects of the school. Many parents and carers wrote individual supportive comments such as how well the school has helped pupils transfer from Nursery to Reception and how the school has improved since the headteacher arrived in September. Several identified how they appreciate the inclusion of parents in registration period. Very few had individual concerns which were considered as part of the inspection process and were not consistent with the team's view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Larklands Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 229 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	68	35	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	83	75	27	24	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	57	41	37	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	69	62	35	32	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	67	34	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	58	43	39	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	66	36	32	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	59	53	42	38	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	58	41	37	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	48	45	41	9	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	52	42	38	9	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	67	60	38	34	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	77	69	29	26	4	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Larklands Infant School, Derbyshire, DE7 5DR

Thank you for welcoming us and helping us when we came to your school. We really enjoyed visiting you and a special thank you to Year 2 pupils who invited us to their tea party. Your school is giving you a good education. You are making good progress in your work and are able to do the things that we usually expect by the time you are in Year 2.

There are many things we admired about your school and these are a few of them:

- interesting and enjoyable work is helping you make good progress
- your behaviour is good and you all get on well together
- adults look after you very well and you feel safe
- teachers plan your lessons well and make sure the work they give you matches your skills
- the school is well led and managed.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do to make it better. They are:

- for those of you in Nursery and Reception to monitor your progress closely so that teachers know what are the next things you need to learn and include this in planning
- work with parents and carers of those of you with poor attendance records to ensure that everyone attends school as often as possible
- help you develop a greater understanding of the wider community and of other cultures by developing links with other schools and communities and then monitor the impact of these links on community cohesion.

You can help by carrying on working hard and all coming to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood

Lead inspector

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