

Linton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112978
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	338067
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kath Benstead
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Bramwell
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors observed lessons, either as one of 19 formal observations or on learning walks undertaken jointly with the headteacher. All of the ten teachers were observed teaching. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the assessments and progress pupils make in their learning, the school's own evaluation of its work and school improvement plan, as well as 64 parental questionnaire responses and questionnaires returned by staff and a representative sample of pupils. Meetings were held with staff, representatives from the governing body and groups of pupils.

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

- the quality of learning and the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science
- the demands placed on pupils in lessons from Year 1 through to Year 6, including provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and its impact on outcomes for both Nursery and Reception aged children
- the extent to which the school has improved the quality of teaching since its last inspection
- the accuracy and rigour of self-evaluation and the extent to which the leadership team and governors demonstrate the capacity to sustain improvements to attainment and pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized school. Most pupils are White British and others come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds which includes pupils of Black Caribbean, Asian or mixed heritage. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class for three-year-olds who attend part-time, and two classes that have full-time Reception aged children, of which one is mixed-aged with Reception children taught with Year 1 pupils. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average compared with most schools, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A lower than average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. The main areas of need include pupils with moderate learning difficulties and pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Linton has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. It has the capacity to sustain the current improvement to standards of attainment and provides a satisfactory education. A notable strength in the school's provision is the care, guidance and support it provides for all pupils, which are having a positive effect on their good behaviour and above average attendance. The large majority of parents who returned questionnaires are pleased with the school and what it offers. Many have paid tribute to the commitment of the headteacher and staff to the welfare and support they provide their children.

Achievement is satisfactory and attainment is in line with the national average, although test results last year show that some pupils did not achieve as well as they should in science where standards were below average. Compared with recent years, pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on course to reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science, reflecting improvements to teaching and assessment. There is still more to do as teachers are not always expecting enough of pupils who have the potential to reach or exceed the standards expected for their age. As a result, some pupils fall short of their expected learning targets because of inconsistencies in the rigour of assessment and the infrequency with which teachers check pupils' progress. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the climate for learning is positive and supportive. Pupils feel safe and trust their teachers and support staff because they have positive and productive relationships with them. The staff have worked hard to celebrate achievement with stimulating and colourfully displayed examples of pupils' work and efforts. Lessons are purposeful and engaging but there are missed opportunities to extend pupils' thinking or provide enough time for them to reflect or initiate their own ideas. Teachers have improved the consistency of their planning and use assessments of pupils' performance to prepare work that will take pupils to the next steps in their learning. However, the pace of learning in lessons is hampered by some undemanding work and expectations. In English lessons, for example, pupils are not always given enough time to write at length independently, or edit and improve their writing, so their progress slows. In mathematics, despite some very good examples of focussed and challenging questioning, particularly in Key Stage 2, some lessons do not fully extend the learning of more capable pupils. This limits opportunities for them to apply their number skills to challenging problem solving. Science standards are improving well after a period of decline but science lessons do not always encourage pupils to think for themselves or work independently to solve problems or initiate ideas. The curriculum, although satisfactory, does not extend opportunities for pupils to write or research a wide range of topics and subjects to accelerate learning or broaden understanding.

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The school has made a start at improving standards to meet challenging targets and the leadership team works closely with governors to monitor and support teachers. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils whose circumstances cause them to be vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there remain inconsistencies of practice and variations in pupils' and teachers' performance across classes, reflecting shortcomings in the rigour of monitoring undertaken by governors and senior staff. Assessments are being checked by subject and phase leaders but the headteacher has yet to establish a more robust and systematic process of lesson visits, audits, reviews and assessments to ensure that all pupils reach their targets. There have been recent improvements, including changes to the composition of the governing body, so that governors are now in a stronger position to support and challenge the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science by:
 - expanding the curriculum so there are more opportunities for pupils to write extensively and independently across a broader range of subjects
 - providing more challenging tasks in mathematics so pupils can apply their number skills to problem solving
 - extending pupils' learning in science and making investigative work more engaging and challenging.
- Improve the consistency and effectiveness of the teaching by:
 - raising expectations in lessons so that tasks place greater demands on pupils and are ambitious and challenging
 - providing more opportunities for pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to develop independence and initiate their own ideas to extend their learning
 - identifying through sharper assessments those pupils who are capable of exceeding age related levels so that the tasks provided for them better meet their learning needs
 - using assessment more frequently to check that all pupils are on course to reach their expected learning targets.
- Ensure that the leadership team and governors undertake more robust monitoring of pupils' and teachers' performance in order to improve the quality of teaching and sustain a rise in attainment.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

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Children join the school in the Nursery and Reception years with skills and abilities that are in line with those expected of three- and four-year-olds. Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is average, signifying satisfactory achievement overall. Assessments and national test results in previous years show variations, reflecting inconsistencies in the teaching and support provided for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support and make satisfactory progress. Pupils of higher ability are increasingly being supported towards challenging targets but lessons do not always place sufficient demands on them so their progress varies across classes. Pupils are usually active in their learning because resources are practical and engaging. Well devised visual prompts on interactive whiteboards help pupils to explain their ideas. This was very well illustrated when Year 6 pupils worked out how best to convert fractions to percentages because the diagrams displayed on the whiteboard clarified their understanding. Opportunities are missed however, when pupils are not given sufficient time to write independently or learn through trial and error because the teaching is too overbearing or prescriptive, so limiting learning and progress.

Diligent assessments of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have helped to accelerate their progress so they reach standards that are comparable nationally to their peers. Pupils feel safe and behave well. They adopt healthy lifestyles when taking part in a good range of sports and activities during and after school, although some packed lunches do not always provide a healthy or balanced diet. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is reflected well in the courteous way they treat each other. Pupils reflect well on the needs of others in their community, for example, through their efforts to raise funds for families in need at home and abroad.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3

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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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons pupils are clear about what they are learning. Teachers share each lesson's objectives with pupils so they are made aware about the next steps in their learning, but the rigour and pace of lessons is inconsistent across classes. There are good examples of teachers' marking that identifies what pupils need to do next to improve their work, but pupils are not always given time to edit, improve or correct their work.

Relationships are good and pupils respond well to their teachers, who seek to make lessons interesting and lively. This was clearly the case in a good lesson for Year 2 pupils when they were motivated by the 'wizardry' of the 'Harry Potter' books to write extended sentences that successfully improved their writing. However, in some lessons pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to work independently. For example, in some mathematics lessons pupils do not have sufficient time to explain the methods used when calculating. Although satisfactory, there is still scope to broaden the curriculum further. Opportunities are missed to combine subjects or topics that will allow pupils to explore and initiate their own ideas, research and read more widely, or write independently.

The good care and support that the school provides for pupils is carefully targeted to remove barriers for those who experience difficulties, including the most vulnerable pupils. The school makes effective use of support from a range of welfare and health agencies, underpinning its strong commitment to the care and welfare of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by their good example. They oversee the support, development and training of teaching and support staff which has led to

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improving attainment. Increasingly, senior staff and phase leaders undertake pupil progress meetings and check assessments with teachers, reflecting the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils. The regularity of lesson observations and audits of pupils' work and progress are not systematic or robust enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly those of higher ability, reach their expected targets. This has resulted in some lapses in pupils' performance and accounts for the inconsistencies in the pace of learning and the quality of teaching across the school.

Governors are committed and supportive and now have a wealth of assessment information to make informed choices that will increasingly help them shape the direction of the school. However, the impact of self-evaluation and reviews of pupils' and teachers' performance do not fully involve governors. Consequently, there is room to improve monitoring so that senior staff and governors can jointly establish clear priorities and actions that will sustain a rise in attainment.

Staff morale is high because the headteacher is calm, positive and good at listening to the views of pupils and staff. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory as pupils appreciate and learn about the main world religions and different cultures that exist in the local and wider community. The staff are increasingly checking performance and assessment data about different ethnic groups to judge the impact of the school's work on achievement, although this is not fully embedded in practice so variations in achievement exist between groups.

At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were met. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that suitable adults come into contact with pupils and in ensuring that records are kept under review.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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 equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Nursery and Reception children make satisfactory progress so that attainment is in line with that expected of five-year-olds in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. The staff are skilled and effective in laying secure foundations for children's learning and development. They provide a stimulating range of activities such as role play, stories, songs, games and puzzles that help the children to improve their reading, writing, problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy skills. Nursery children settle quickly and make a good contribution to the setting with, for example, good opportunities for them to self-register for each session by sticking their names on the 'busy bee board'. Reception children make satisfactory progress linking letters and sounds to words as well as engaging in stimulating mathematics activities when counting toy frogs. The children develop early scientific and creative skills well when exploring different textures as they mix colours and explore the consistency of flour, water or coloured foam. They benefit from working in outdoor and indoor areas safely and productively. However, children, particularly in the Reception year, do not have enough opportunities to initiate their own ideas or explore beyond what has been planned by teachers and support staff, and this limits their progress and independence. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well organised and resourced. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the staff work cooperatively ensuring there is a smooth transition between Nursery and Reception, and from Reception to Year 1. All staff are very committed to their role in supporting and managing the children's welfare and in providing good opportunities for children to explore beyond their local community.

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

Views of parents and carers

Although a relatively small number of parents returned questionnaires, the large majority of the 64 responses were positive and parents believe that this is a caring and supportive school, views that match those of inspectors. Parents are mostly pleased with the progress their children are making and with the way staff look after them. They also believe, as inspectors do, that pupils behave well. Parents and carers have formed trusting relationships with the staff, although a few would like the school to seek their views more.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Linton Primary 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 269 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	73	17	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	30	42	66	3	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	36	41	64	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	31	42	66	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	41	37	58	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	31	41	64	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	31	41	64	3	5	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)	16	25	41	64	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	41	34	53	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	34	39	61	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	38	30	47	5	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	41	31	48	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	39	37	58	2	3	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Linton Primary School, Derbyshire, DE12 6QA

Thank you for being so welcoming when the inspectors came to see you. We have judged that you go to a satisfactory school. The inspectors were pleased with your good behaviour and attendance, so keep it up. The Nursery and Reception children are making satisfactory progress. I really enjoyed talking to the children and some of their parents. It was an exciting time for them as they prepared to visit a farm.

You are making satisfactory progress in lessons and this is helping most of you to reach the standards expected for your age when you leave at the end of Year 6. There have been satisfactory improvements to the school since your last inspection. You have a good range of sports and out-of-school activities which help you develop your interests and talents still further and the staff take good care of you.

We have asked your teachers to help you do even better. Inspectors have judged that you could do better in reading, writing, mathematics and science. We have asked your teachers to provide you with more opportunities to write more extensively in a broader range of subjects and topics. We would also like your teachers to help you do better in mathematics by giving you opportunities to practice more challenging problem-solving tasks. You are starting to do better in science as most of you are on course to reach higher standards. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you do more challenging work in science as well. Inspectors believe that your teachers could do more to encourage you, including children in Nursery and Reception, to work independently, form your own ideas and explore things further so you can do harder work and reach higher standards. We have also asked both your teachers and governors to increase the amount of checks being made on how well you and your teachers are doing to make sure that the school carries on raising standards.

You can all help too by carrying on trying hard and coming to school every day. The inspectors thought that you were mature and sensible, so keep it up. I wish you, your parents, staff and governors the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead inspector

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