

Littletown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113099
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338094
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Jeffery
Headteacher	Caroline Bond
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who spent the majority of time observing learning, visiting 20 lessons, observing 18 teachers, and making a further six visits to lessons. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and several pupils both formally and informally. They scrutinised a range of documentation, including data showing how well pupils make progress as well as policies and documentation concerning safeguarding pupils and ensuring their welfare. Additionally, they analysed questionnaires returned by 174 parents and carers.

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

- the levels of challenge at Key Stage 2 for boys' writing, girls' mathematics and higher-attaining pupils in science
- the impact of the school's recent focus on developing pupils' understanding of cultural diversity
- governors' and subject leaders' involvement in curriculum developments and promoting community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school with a maintained Nursery. A significant minority of pupils leave and join the school between Years 1 and 6. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are very few whose home language is not English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average in the school as a whole, but in some year groups it is very high. These identified needs are mostly related to communication and language difficulties. There are very few pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school provides and manages a breakfast and after-school club, which were included in this inspection. The school has Healthy School status and holds the Activemark accreditation for physical education.

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

This is a good school. The vast majority of parents are 'delighted' with their child's progress and the school has a good track record of improvement. Some elements of its work are outstanding. Parents were unanimous in expressing their confidence in the school's safeguarding procedures, which at the time of the inspection were excellent. The school is extremely caring and this contributes to examples of individual pupils making exceptional progress in their readiness to learn or in acquiring key skills. Pupils are extremely confident that they are safe in school and have a mature understanding of safety issues. They enjoy school, behave well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's recent initiatives are successfully increasing pupils' understanding of diversity and are already having a positive impact. For example, they have a good understanding of religions other than their own. They are enthusiastically exchanging letters and photographs with pupils at a London school, although this work to give them first-hand experience of others' cultures has only just begun.

The strong senior leadership team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and next priorities. They have successfully worked with staff to develop the curriculum to become more practical, imaginative and relevant for pupils. Teaching has improved, with most lessons being taught well and an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching. This arises in part from the more frequent use of stimulating strategies that take account of pupils' different learning styles and allow all pupils to engage with their learning and make good progress. Greater use is made of more detailed records of pupils' progress by senior staff and class teachers, so helpful intervention is more timely and effective. These strengths contribute to pupils' attainment improving throughout the school and combine to demonstrate the school's good capacity for further development. That said, while subject leaders keenly embrace and participate in developments, leaders of non-tested subjects have yet to take a more proactive role in monitoring, self-evaluating and initiating change. Opportunities for teachers to share the very best practice, for example, in teaching, are missed.

A large majority of children join the Nursery with fewer skills than expected for their age, most noticeably in their speech and social skills. Pupils, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, make good progress throughout their time in school. Over recent years, typically they have reached broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave Year 6. However, last year the impact of school improvement was felt across the school: children left the Early Years Foundation Stage with strengths in key skills, and they left Year 2 above average in reading, writing and mathematics. They left Year 6 broadly average in English, mathematics and science but

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with more pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics than the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding learning by more systematically sharing the very best practice across the school.
- Strengthen the roles of leaders of non-tested subjects before the end of this academic year by giving them greater responsibility for driving whole-school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The impact of school improvement is to be seen in Year 2 and Year 6, where pupils are already working at above-average levels in English, mathematics and science. This reflects their good progress, which is also made by pupils with special educational needs.

The inspection took a particular interest in boys' writing and girls' progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 because these have been recent priorities for school development. Lesson observations show that boys and girls now learn as well as each other because they are equally enthused. When standards exceed expectations for their age, there is no distinction between girls and boys in class. For example, in Years 5 and 6, boys and girls made exceptional progress to reach an equally high standard of work when creating metaphors. Similarly, boys and girls made equally strong progress in mathematics to reach a good level of skill in a lesson that required them to find equivalent fractions, incorporating their understanding of decimal points.

The team also focused on the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils in science because 2009 data indicated that there were fewer pupils reaching the higher Level 5 than is typical nationally. Lesson observations and school records indicate an improvement in this area across the school. For example, Year 2 pupils showed a mature understanding of 'fair tests', with good use of scientific vocabulary. More than half the pupils in Year 6 are already exceeding expectations for their age. This was evident during the inspection when pupils in Year 5 and 6 showed great enjoyment and a sophisticated understanding of the principles of reflection and the factors that contribute to changing the direction of light.

Pupils consistently cooperate well in small groups and their positive attitudes support their good learning. On occasions their behaviour is impeccable and their concentration unflinching. Reflecting the work associated with the national awards, the pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. They are more enthusiastic about exercise than healthy eating. They are considerate young people, curious about the world around them and thoughtful in expressing their feelings about people different from themselves. They accept responsibilities, such as school councillors, willingly and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. While attendance rates match rather than exceed the national average, the school is doing all it can to work with those few families whose

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children are often absent.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. On occasions it is outstanding when very secure subject knowledge means teachers communicate a passion for the subject that is transmitted to pupils. These lessons are characterised by ambitious strategies that are skilfully adapted to the needs of the group. For example, middle-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 visualised mathematical calculations located around the classroom to accelerate multiplication skills. Pupils who find learning difficult in Years 3 and 4 made exceptional strides because they were encouraged to associate images with features of a story and its characters. Consistent strengths lie in the valuable contribution made by teaching assistants, especially for those pupils who are struggling, and there are good relationships between adults and pupils and helpful marking. On occasions, the pace of part of a lesson slows a little, and learning is satisfactory rather than accelerated. Particular strengths in the curriculum lie in its relevance and interest to pupils, which is helping to improve boys' writing and girls' mathematics. Creative links between subjects

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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make learning fun. For example, pupils in Year 1 use two-dimensional shapes to create 'fairy castles', combining art and mathematics. The school acknowledges that these changes are relatively recent and their impact is not fully embedded. Special programmes to help particular groups or individual pupils are very effective, and contribute to the equally good progress made by different groups of pupils. Special events, such as the global awareness 'fair trade' day, enrich pupils' learning as well as their social and cultural development.

The school is extremely committed to pupils' well-being. Parents appreciate the very smooth transition for children who join the school as older pupils. Transfer arrangements into Year 7 are exemplary. The breakfast and after-school clubs make a significant contribution to the school's outstanding care. This high quality provision is much appreciated by parents. It is well staffed and very well resourced, so pupils are encouraged to extend their skills through a very good variety of activities which accommodate their preferences for active or sedentary pursuits. This gives them a very positive start to the school day.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has ensured that there is a well-shared commitment amongst staff to improving the school. Teachers benefit well from senior managers' monitoring of their lessons, although there are missed opportunities for staff to share their successes. Monitoring, by leaders at all levels, is thorough and self-evaluation accurate. The developing role of middle managers is seen as work in progress.

Subject leaders have contributed successfully to the development of the curriculum. They are poised to take increasing responsibility for initiating school improvement and driving change more strategically. Governors play a full part in school development, holding the school to account, for example, by joining senior staff in evaluating the effectiveness of intervention programmes.

The governing body contributes effectively to ensuring that very detailed and accurate safeguarding policies and systems are current. Particular strengths lie in child protection training, procedures and staff awareness. The school accurately recognises strengths in its work with the local community and in the more recent success in raising pupils' awareness of the global community. They know that they have made a good but very recent start to forging links with a contrasting British community to extend pupils'

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experience, but it is early days.

The school has demonstrated its commitment to equal opportunities and its determination to set, meet and where possible exceed challenging targets. Its most recent success is the closing of gaps between boys' and girls' achievement. There are increasing examples of individual pupils making outstanding progress in key skills because of very well-targeted intervention. Governors and staff are working together relentlessly to raise pupils' attainment and achievement, embarking on several initiatives on many fronts. The impact is apparent in recently raised standards and the school is well placed for continued development.

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	2
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	1
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 get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception, where they typically make good progress because of well-pitched adult expectations. Parents appreciate the speed with which their children settle and learn. For example, one parent wrote that having joined Reception in January with no knowledge of letters her daughter is now beginning to read. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader successfully ensures that the whole-staff team has a good understanding of the latest national guidance and how young children learn best. This contributes to adults' skills in assessing what children can do, what they need to do next and a sensitive approach when children are exploring their own ideas. For example, during the inspection, children made good use of their understanding of the world around them to develop a story about police officers and criminals. Their learning was enhanced by adults discreetly providing clipboards, so children could use their early writing skills to record 'naughty people'.

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The leader recognises that staff are still developing their 'key worker' roles in overseeing children's learning. A strong start has been made to giving children opportunities for choice and independence and, on occasion, learning is outstanding. However, not all activities are always equally stimulating. When they are most effective, children make outstanding gains. For example, in one session they made noticeable gains in their use of the language of shape and position because they were hugely enthused by exciting opportunities to use a variety of construction equipment indoors and outside, while adults skilfully asked pertinent questions to extend their thinking.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was an above-average return of questionnaires and these indicated a high level of satisfaction with the school. The vast majority of parents are happy with their child's experience of school and are highly appreciative of its work. Comments that express a concern are individual and do not contribute to a common theme. A very few concerns related broadly to communication issues, not shared by the majority of parents or substantiated by inspection findings. A very small minority of responses disagreed that behaviour was managed well. During the inspection, behaviour was good and well managed. All the parents who responded are entirely confident in the extent to which the school keeps their child safe.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Littletown 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 174 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 396 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	116	67	55	32	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	109	63	65	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	92	53	79	45	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	88	51	82	47	4	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	93	53	78	45	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	84	48	86	49	2	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	88	51	81	47	2	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)	71	41	83	48	6	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	80	46	90	52	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	35	89	51	12	7	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	41	87	50	8	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	86	49	76	44	4	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	60	67	39	2	1	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.



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19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Littletown Primary School, Honiton EX14 2EG

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school recently. A special thank you goes to those of you who met with me or one of the other inspectors and shared your work and your ideas. We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school and that some things, such as how well you are kept safe and cared for and how safe you feel, are fantastic.

We were impressed by your very grown-up understanding of how to keep safe. One of the most important strengths we found is that you make good progress in your learning and you are beginning to reach standards in English, mathematics and science that exceed expectations for your age. We were pleased to see how well you behave and how hard you usually work in lessons. All these strengths prepare you well for the future.

Sometimes your concentration is fantastic and you make remarkable progress in lessons because the teacher is guiding you brilliantly, and you are 'on the edge of your seats'. For example, we saw this when some of you were observing what happened to the beam of light travelling through a 'smoke chamber'. We also saw it in some of your maths and literacy lessons when you were visualising maths calculations or thinking of images to represent characters in a story. We have asked your teachers to share their best ideas more so that this kind of exciting learning happens even more often. We know that you appreciate how much the staff care about you and all the steps they take to keep making the school even better. The governors and all the adults in your school want it to keep improving. We have asked them to make sure that the teachers have more opportunities to come up with their own ideas about making things even better. We wish you every success in the future and hope you always enjoy learning so much.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector

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