

# Linden Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 115483          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Gloucestershire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 338591          |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 3–4 March 2010  |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Mary Harlow HMI |

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

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|--|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 317   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                      |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mrs Joanne Fay  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mrs Angela Jarvis                                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 20 March 2007   |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Linden Road<br>Gloucester<br>Gloucestershire<br>GL1 5HU |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01452 527020  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01452 572026  |
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|--------------------------|----------------|
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in school observing learning. They visited 18 lessons and meetings were held with staff, governors, the parent support worker and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including 111 parent questionnaires.

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

- the progress made by different groups of pupils, particularly more able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- pupils' achievement in writing
- the extent to which lessons challenge all pupils to learn at a swift pace
- the effectiveness of the strategies and monitoring systems implemented by leaders to improve the pupils' attendance.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools and serves the city of Gloucester. Most pupils come from the immediate community but a significant number come from surrounding areas across the city. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage but an increasing number of pupils are from a wide variety of other backgrounds, the largest groups of which is Polish. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average; the majority of these pupils have speech, language and communication problems, moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social problems. Staffing has stabilised this year following years of turbulence. Many children attend the on-site children's centre and nursery before starting school. This provision was not inspected by the team.

**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

'I have seen this school improve for the better over recent years.' 'Learning is a wonderful adventure.' 'It is nice to know that when you drop your child off, they are safe.' These are typical of the views of parents. Inspectors agree.

Linden Primary School provides a good and improving education. It is a harmonious, inclusive learning community where both pupils and adults want to be. All at the school care for the pupils exceptionally well. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and most other aspects of their personal development are good. Monitoring by senior leaders and governors is rigorous. All evaluate the school's work accurately; this enables the staff to set the right targets to get better. Staff are dedicated and work tirelessly to get better. All are ambitious for the future and this underpins the school's good capacity to improve.

A significant majority of children start school with a lot of catching up to do, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They settle into the Reception Year well and make good progress. This good progress continues across the school; by the time they leave, pupils attain average standards overall, but not in writing nor at the higher levels in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in writing is now improving and the gap in achievement between reading and writing is beginning to close, but the school's initiatives have not yet had a proven impact on standards. All pupils achieve well and there is no significant difference in the overall progress made by different groups. Nonetheless, on a few occasions, more able pupils are not always challenged to learn at a swift pace. Marking and assessment are used effectively to target all groups of pupils. That said, systems for checking the pupils' progress are not easily accessible, and marking is not always used effectively to set tasks at the right level of challenge or to show pupils clearly how to improve their work.

Pupils enjoy their learning, as reflected in their improved attendance. This is now close to the national average as a result of the recent excellent initiatives implemented, including the appointment of the parent support worker.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further, particularly in writing and at the higher levels in all subjects, by ensuring that:
  - more able pupils are challenged to learn at a swift pace in all classes
  - tracking procedures for checking the pupils' progress are easily accessible
  - learning environments are rich in literacy and more opportunities are created to

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develop pupils' writing skills across the curriculum.

- Make better use of the effective assessment procedures by ensuring that:
  - all pupils understand how to improve their work, especially in writing
  - there are more opportunities for pupils to assess their work and that of their peers
  - the good marking practices established in the school are shared amongst all staff.

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

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, good behaviour and hard work mean most groups make good progress in lessons. They respond enthusiastically to the consistently good or better teaching, try with sustained endeavour to meet the high expectations set by most staff, and take delight in their accomplishments.

Pupils who struggle with aspects of their work make good progress because of support that is carefully tailored to their needs, and because their progress is monitored assiduously by the adults. Any pupils who fall behind benefit from early, effective interventions to help them catch up. Provision is not always tailored so well for the more able pupils, who are sometimes not challenged enough to reach the higher standards they are capable of.

The school has been successful in improving standards of attainment in mathematics and science; they are now broadly average and still improving. However, standards in writing still remain a weakness; this is a significant factor in the lower rates of progress pupils make in English, and has a limiting impact on the way they are prepared for their future lives. Nonetheless, there was strong evidence in the lessons observed and in the pupils' books to show that standards in writing are now rising across the school.

Pupils are fiercely proud of their school. They undertake duties around the school diligently and the older pupils show good levels of care for the younger ones. They have a well-developed sense of social and moral issues. Without exception pupils stand back and open doors for visitors, greeting them with friendly smiles and saying politely, 'after you'!

Pupils have a good appreciation of life in other cultures, brought about through well-planned global curricular themes and interesting initiatives led by pupils attending the popular 'world explorer club'. The school's Healthy School Award is a fitting testament to the pupils' good appreciation of healthy lifestyles.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> 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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|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 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        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

**How effective is the provision?**

Positive, caring relationships and excellent management of behaviour characterise all teaching. Teaching assistants play a full part in this and form good partnerships with the teachers and the pupils. Their carefully planned role ensures that pupils with additional needs are fully engaged and challenged appropriately to succeed, which they do.

Tracking systems to check the pupils' progress are comprehensive and teachers are increasingly using data effectively to inform planning. That said, the current system is not sufficiently refined to ensure that data on the pupils' progress are easily accessible. The marking policy is consistently applied. Nonetheless, comments do not always inform pupils of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

In the best lessons teaching is lively and moves at a fast pace. Staff challenge the pupils to take the lead in their learning, either independently or in groups. As a result they are highly motivated, kept on their toes, and no learning time is lost. Nevertheless, in the small number of satisfactory lessons observed the pace of learning was not brisk enough. Pupils spent too much time on tasks; they were insufficiently challenged, especially the more able, and became restless.

The creative curriculum is impressively designed to meet the needs of the Linden pupils. However, learning environments are insufficiently rich in literacy and numeracy prompts to support the pupils' progress. Although pupils' work in most themed books is of a high quality, cross-curricular displays do little to bring the curriculum to life. Nonetheless, all pupils benefit considerably from the imaginative family homework projects such as the impressive work on the Egyptians.

The school's outstanding commitment to the care, support and guidance of all pupils is

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at the heart of its philosophy. Pupils are cared for sensitively. They in turn feel safe and protected. Those pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are monitored assiduously. Supervision at the start and the end of the day is vigilant.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Exceptionally passionate leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by an energetic, skilled senior team, is ensuring that the school continues to improve. An enthusiastic team spirit permeates throughout the school; all are ambitious to raise standards further and there is no complacency. Monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders is both accurate and rigorous. Subject leadership in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is excellent.

Leaders, including governors, know the school well and are setting the right targets to make it better. Good use is made of the governors' professional knowledge and expertise to monitor and evaluate the work of the school, and to hold it to account.

The needs of all individuals are analysed carefully and appropriate strategies are in place to ensure most groups of pupils progress at a swift pace. Robust steps are taken to safeguard children and there are strong partnerships with parents and other agencies such as external therapists. The school reaches out to communities in the United Kingdom and beyond successfully. It has good plans in place to develop this effective work further.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |

| <b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>              |          |
|--|----------|
| Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms                           |          |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>                                 | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>                | <b>2</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The children get a good start to their school life and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Induction arrangements are planned carefully to secure strong partnerships with parents and the pre-school providers. Children display a good awareness of the daily routines and move around the school and the indoor and outdoor classrooms impressively. This is a fitting testament to the excellent levels of care they receive.

Children play happily and safely together and enjoy their time in the 'garden centre' immensely. They receive appropriate praise for 'excellent listening' and demonstrate good control coupled with an awareness of space when participating enthusiastically in physical activities. Children are confident to express their ideas of how to change the role-play area from the pirate ship to a flower shop.

There is a good balance of whole-class, group and child-initiated activities, and an appropriate emphasis on teaching letters and sounds and number skills. Adults know the children exceptionally well and relationships are strong. As a result all children are developing positive attitudes to their learning.

Leadership is good and strong teamwork ensures that planning is carefully tailored to meet the children's needs. Effective use of assessment and recording information ensures all areas of learning are fully met. That said, there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. Leaders have good plans to improve the quality of the outdoor provision to ensure seamless indoor and outdoor learning.

Assessment information shows that by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children have made good progress in all aspects of learning from their low starting points, particularly in speaking and listening. Nonetheless, children are entering Year 1 with below-average standards, especially in writing.

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| 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        |



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. Most parents who responded felt that their children enjoyed school and were kept safe. Other parents noted the approachability of the headteacher and staff. A few parents had concerns about pupils' behaviour, lack of communication about their child's progress and the amount of time teachers in management posts are out of class. Inspectors judge the school to be diligent in dealing with parental concerns.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Linden 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 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 317 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 75             | 67 | 35    | 32 | 0        | 0 | 1                 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 77             | 69 | 34    | 30 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 58             | 52 | 47    | 42 | 5        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 54             | 48 | 51    | 46 | 3        | 3 | 1                 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 66             | 59 | 41    | 37 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 57             | 51 | 49    | 44 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 55             | 49 | 53    | 47 | 2        | 2 | 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) | 41             | 37 | 60    | 54 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 49             | 44 | 58    | 52 | 3        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 39             | 35 | 63    | 56 | 7        | 6 | 1                 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 39             | 35 | 59    | 53 | 5        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 66             | 59 | 41    | 37 | 2        | 2 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 66             | 59 | 41    | 37 | 3        | 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul> |
| 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.**



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Linden Primary School, Gloucester GL1 5HU

I am writing to say thank you very much for giving us such a warm welcome during our recent visit to Linden Primary School. We were impressed with the way you greeted us so courteously with friendly smiles. We enjoyed talking with you about your work, hearing about the 'Big Dig' project and watching you chat over lunch. You go to a good school. Here are some of the special things that it does well.

- Your school looks after you exceptionally well and the adults want to do their best for you. Everyone in the school cares for each other and the older pupils look after the younger ones very well indeed. You behave extremely well. The way you walked to the playground in response to the fire alarm was excellent.
- In the Reception class, you get off to good start in all aspects of your learning; you make good progress as you move through the school and attain average standards overall by the time you leave, but not in writing.
- The school council is doing a sterling job and the play leaders organise the 'Huff and Puff' activities and sporting tournaments at lunchtimes with great aplomb. You are proactive in reaching out to the local community through the excellent Linden Eye newspaper and your innovative campaign to reduce speeding in the local area around the school.
- Your teachers plan interesting trips and fun activities which help you to enjoy school. The teaching in the school is good; on occasions it is outstanding.
- You have a committed headteacher, caring adults and dedicated governors at your school. We have asked them to raise standards, particularly in writing, provide more challenging work for those of you who find work easy, and improve the marking of your work.

It was a real privilege to visit Linden Primary School. Continue to work hard and, most importantly, enjoy your learning.

Best wishes for the future. We hope that you achieve great things!

Yours sincerely

Mrs M Harlow

Her Majesty's Inspector

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