

Liss Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116021
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338705
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sarah Roche
Headteacher	Mrs Teresa Offer
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They spent 50% of their time looking at learning, by observing lessons and other activities, and scrutinising pupils' workbooks and folders. Inspectors visited 12 lessons during which they saw eight teachers. They had meetings with the headteacher, several other staff, governors and pupils. Inspectors also spoke to some parents and carers and examined questionnaires completed by 88 parents and carers and 14 staff.

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

- the extent to which learning and progress are consistent for different pupil groups, especially for girls in mathematics
- how successfully the method of organising the curriculum offers worthwhile learning experiences for pupils
- how well the recently reorganised leadership structure is supporting ambition and the drive for improvement.

Information about the school

This is a two-form entry school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies in each year, but is broadly average overall. The most common needs of these pupils relate to moderate difficulty in speech, language and communication, or behavioural and emotional difficulties. Almost all pupils have White British backgrounds and none is at an early stage of learning to speak English. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in two Reception classes. The school shares a parent support advisor with other local partnership schools. It has Healthy Schools status.

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 school provides good quality and performance across all areas. Parents and carers agree. They say that their children are happy at Liss, are well cared for, and make good progress. One summed up the views of many with the comment, 'Each child is known as an individual...my children have thrived at Liss, where achievement is celebrated and recognised.'

Much effort has been put into making the school an attractive, welcoming environment and pupils really enjoy coming in each day. They show this through their above average attendance, good behaviour, and enthusiasm for joining in with all that the school offers. Effective strategies to improve the curriculum and teaching have raised pupils' attainment so that it is now significantly above average and higher than at the time of the last inspection. Strategies have focused on making sure that provision meets the needs of all pupils. These have resulted, for example, in a marked improvement in the attainment of the most able pupils in reading. Leaders know that more needs to be done. Attainment in mathematics, while above average, is not as emphatically so as it is in reading and writing. Girls achieve as well as boys in most subjects but not in mathematics.

Teaching and assessment are good overall, but not fully consistent. In most lessons, teachers plan interesting and varied activities that engage pupils well, encouraging them to be enthusiastically involved in their own learning. In a few lessons, activities are less imaginative and time is not so well used, so that a lively pace of learning is not maintained throughout. On these occasions, a few pupils become temporarily less well engaged. Assessment is generally used effectively to gauge pupils' progress and identify their next steps. On a few occasions, this is not so effective. Sometimes, for example, teachers do not use assessment to plan enough challenge for the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics, so that their progress, while generally matching that of other pupils, temporarily slows.

Parents, staff and governors express high confidence in the headteacher, who is providing exemplary leadership. She is sharing her strong ambition very effectively to make this an outstanding school. She provides an extremely clear lead for the school's direction and is helping staff to develop their capabilities for contributing to this. Leaders have tackled the main improvement point from the previous inspection effectively, to sharpen self-evaluation and focus it on pupils' attainment. As a result, rigorous, realistic self-evaluation has given leaders an accurate view of improvement priorities. Well considered strategies, for example to improve the quality of teaching in reading and writing, have raised pupils' attainment. Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in some aspects of monitoring quality and performance in their areas, for example by

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observing lessons as a basis for guiding colleagues on how to improve their practice. Plans are in hand to tackle this. In consolidating and building further on strengths identified at the last inspection and the clarity of vision for the future, the school shows that it has good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase progress in mathematics to match that in literacy by ensuring that:
 - provision always helps girls to make equal progress to boys
 - more able pupils are consistently well challenged.
- Ensure that teaching is equally effective in all lessons in engaging pupils and providing for all of their needs by:
 - making assessment consistently accurate in gauging pupils' progress and planning their next steps
 - increasing subject leaders' involvement in monitoring teaching, and guiding colleagues on how to improve where necessary.

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

Pupils make good progress in all years. Attainment is highest in reading and writing, where it is considerably above average. It is considerably above average for boys in mathematics, but only slightly so for girls. The school's analysis shows that this is because girls have often responded more passively to challenges than boys, so that their ability to apply their skills to solve problems has developed less well. Strategies to help girls to improve are at an early stage, so not yet fully demonstrating their effectiveness. However, inspectors saw evidence of developing impact in lessons. For example, in an imaginative Year 2 activity based on the Katie Morag stories, girls were involved fully in sharing their ideas. They worked effectively in pairs, using their mathematics skills to devise the shortest route for delivering the post to story characters. The needs of pupils with communication difficulties are carefully identified and effective plans are made for their individual needs, so that their progress matches that of their classmates.

Pupils say that teachers make lessons fun, which helps them to achieve well. One boy said the school, " gives me a good infection,' explaining that this means it makes him really want to learn. Pupils demonstrate this in lessons by showing interest and enthusiastically volunteering answers and ideas in discussions. The behaviour of the great majority is very good. A small number, including those who arrive with behavioural and emotional difficulties, sometimes find it difficult to maintain this, for example when they are less engaged than usual by lessons. Pupils say that they feel very safe and trust the adults to help them if they have a problem. They are developing a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and live active lives. Pupils are involved fully in school life and interested in the wider world. School councillors showed this in a meeting where they came up with thoughtful ideas to raise funds to help pupils in a Ugandan school. Frequent opportunities to learn to collaborate with others, together

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with their good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good overall. They show good ability to reflect, when for example, sharing their ideas about ways to ensure that modern lifestyles do not damage the environment.

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

How effective is the provision?

All adults are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. Systems to ensure this are well organised and diligently carried out. The school puts much effort into making sure that partnerships enhance pupils' care and learning. This includes liaison with a range of specialist agencies to provide effectively for pupils who need additional care. In partnership with other schools, workshops are provided to help parents to support their children's learning and well-being. Strenuous and successful efforts are made to get all groups of parents and carers to come to these. In making sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make as much progress as their classmates, teamwork between teachers and support assistants is generally effective.

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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Occasionally, this is not the case, when lesson plans do not make the roles of support assistants clear enough. Consequently, for example, pupils finding it difficult to concentrate do not receive speedy guidance to help them to refocus their attention. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils. In some classes, it gives good guidance on how pupils can improve their work, but this is not consistent across all classes.

The curriculum has an effective balance of lessons where pupils learn literacy and numeracy skills and those where they use these in integrated projects. This makes their work more stimulating by giving them 'real' tasks where they can bring together their learning from different areas. Teachers make good use of these opportunities as the basis for exciting tasks in subjects such as mathematics and geography. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and small groups. This helps pupils to develop speaking and listening skills, while deepening their understanding of the topics being learned. This was seen in a Year 2 English lesson, where pupils developed their reading and writing abilities by discussing how characters might feel about the events in a story. Teachers do not always take full advantage of computers to further enhance pupils' learning and leaders have correctly made the development of ICT across the curriculum an improvement priority. A good range of well attended clubs, trips and visitors adds well to pupils' enjoyment.

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?

There is strong unity of purpose among staff working at all levels. While proud of their school, they share with the headteacher a self-critical awareness of how it could be improved further. The reorganised leadership structure is succeeding well in involving more staff in contributing to whole-school decisions. Staff say that this is enhancing their motivation by giving them more opportunities to use and develop their skills. Several are new to their roles and are still developing their effectiveness, but they are doing so well, supported by good training. The governing body provides a good balance of experienced governors and recent appointments, who have brought fresh ideas. They support the school well, while being ready to challenge it if necessary. Governors meet their statutory requirements, including that for ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective. These are well organised, ensuring that the site is safe and all adults who work with pupils are properly checked. The school strives effectively to ensure that all pupils are included without discrimination and that there is equality of opportunity for

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all. It is very alert to cases where this is not complete, for example quickly identifying that many girls do less well at mathematics than boys and devising ways to tackle this. The school gives very good help to pupils to be part of a cohesive school community and to develop as valuable members of their local community through, for example, encouraging them to enthusiastically contribute to the Harvest Festival. Links with a school in Uganda give pupils good opportunities to consider how their lives differ from those of pupils there. Leaders know that provision to help pupils to understand cultural, ethnic, religious and socio-economic diversity in the United Kingdom is less strong and they have plans to improve this. These include developing a link with a school in which pupils' lives are very different.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

While there is considerable variation between different children, their skills and knowledge are at generally expected levels for their age on entry to the school. Children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, they are very secure in all of their areas of learning, particularly in their disposition and attitudes. The only slightly weaker area is that boys do not develop their creative skills quite as well as the other areas of their learning. Staff have used assessment effectively to spot this and have correctly identified that there is room for improvement in provision to support boys. They are tackling this by, for example, adding resources that encourage 'big building' activities. Overall provision is good. The classrooms are attractive and spacious, providing plenty of room and varied resources for children to enjoy a good range of

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activities. Plans ensure a good balance of activities that adults lead and those that children choose for themselves. Children have plenty of opportunities to go outdoors, where stimulating resources encourage them to learn by playing and exploring. Children quickly learn to keep themselves safe and healthy and to be considerate towards others when they play. There is good teamwork, with well established staff providing good support to help less experienced colleagues to develop their expertise. Development planning is founded upon a good awareness of the areas requiring improvement.

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

More than half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Overall, they expressed very positive opinions about the school. Several praised the headteacher, using terms such as 'inspirational' and referring to her approachability and sincere concern for the learning and well-being of every child. Parents and carers raised only a small number of concerns. A few think that the school could be better at communicating with them about their children's progress, and when they have concerns. The headteacher had already found this out through her own survey. She agrees that there are ways, for example, in which reports could be more informative and is investigating ways to achieve this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Liss 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 167 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	73	23	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	66	75	22	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	41	47	42	48	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	58	33	38	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	69	26	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	70	25	28	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	68	28	32	0	0	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)	42	48	40	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	52	39	44	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	41	45	51	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	44	45	51	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	70	24	27	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	72	24	27	1	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.



28 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Liss Infant School, Liss GU33 7LQ

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and are grateful to you for sharing your work with us. We found that yours is a good school. You told us that you feel very safe and enjoy school a great deal. You show your enjoyment by coming to school regularly, behaving well and happily joining in with all the things that happen in your school. This really helps your teachers to help you to do well and makes it really worthwhile for them to work hard for you.

You make good progress in your learning, especially in reading and writing. Your progress is not quite so strong in mathematics, especially for girls. The adults know that this is because they need to give you more chances to practise using your skills to solve problems. We could see that this is already helping because we often saw girls working well together to solve really hard problems. We have asked the teachers to make the improvements as quickly as possible, so that this happens in all mathematics lessons.

You told us that teachers make lessons fun. In most lessons, we could see that this is true. A few lessons are not so interesting and sometimes work is too easy for some of you. This makes some of you become bored. We have asked the teachers to make all lessons as good as the best ones. We have also asked those in charge of the different subjects to visit lessons more often. This will help them to check how well the subjects are being taught, so that they can give teachers tips to make their lessons even better.

Your headteacher and the staff know how to make your school even better and are working hard to do this. You can help them if you continue to work as hard as you do now. Well done and very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

George Rayner

Lead inspector

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