

Lydeard St Lawrence Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123702
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340402
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rianne Sewell
Headteacher	Gill Stripp
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were observed and five teachers were seen teaching their own classes. Inspectors held meetings with senior staff, members of the governing body, the school council and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school development plan, assessment data, a sample of pupils' writing books, governing body minutes, documentation relating to safeguarding and a report by the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors looked at 46 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those returned by pupils and members of staff.

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

- what the school is doing to raise pupils' attainment in writing
- how successfully staff use assessment data to plan the next steps in pupils' learning
- provision in the Reception and Year 1 and Year 2 class to ensure Reception children receive full access and entitlement to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum
- the extent and impact of subject leaders' and governors' involvement in whole-school improvement.

Information about the school

This small school consisting of three mixed-age group classes serves the surrounding rural area. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the mixed-age Reception and Key Stage 1 class (Class 1). Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are taught in Class 2 and Year 5 and 6 pupils in Class 3. Most pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, and their main areas of need are speech, language and communication difficulties.

The extended provision, which consists of a breakfast and after-school club, is managed by the governing body. There is also an on-site pre-school (Ladybirds), which is run by an independent management committee and was not part of this inspection.

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 where pupils are happy, work hard and achieve well. It has made many significant improvements since its last inspection and has some outstanding features. Pupils say they love school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils, staff, parents and governors are rightly proud of their school and they work together as a united team to improve what they do. There is a good capacity for future improvement because school self-evaluation is sharp, priorities are well focused and there are high expectations of pupils' academic and personal development.

Pupils make good progress and leave Year 6 with above-average standards in mathematics and reading and exceptionally high standards in science. Standards in writing are average and staff are currently implementing several effective strategies to secure improved standards. However, given that attainment in writing is an improvement area, pupils' writing is not displayed or celebrated sufficiently well throughout the school. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they make a good contribution to school life. They are very kind, considerate and supportive of each other. They find lessons fun and interesting, and most pupils persevere at all times. Effective teaching makes sure that work is challenging for all groups of pupils. The everyday curriculum is satisfactory because it is not planned for in sufficient depth. However, it is enriched considerably by an exceptionally wide range of additional activities. A myriad of sports activities helps pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy life. Art features very strongly in the curriculum. Parents are particularly impressed by the good care, guidance and support for all pupils. Pupils are known and respected as individuals and work is skilfully tailored to meet their various capabilities.

The headteacher and staff work hard to minimise the constraints of their small school building. Recently an attractive building to house the before- and after-school clubs and a new kitchen have been created to enhance pupils' learning. Internal space in the mixed-age Reception and Key Stage 1 class is somewhat limited and there is too much furniture, which restricts the youngest children's opportunities to select their own activities or to engage in purposeful, structured learning and play. The headteacher is a good leader and, together with governors and staff, is very ambitious for the school and works tirelessly to ensure that every pupil has the same good opportunities to benefit from their education. Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection and governors provide good support and challenge. The school successfully promotes cohesion within its own community and has good links with parents, and excellent partnerships with other local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve curriculum planning by:
 - providing more detail about what pupils are to learn in all subjects
 - ensuring pupils get sufficient opportunities to practise, display and celebrate their writing in all subjects.
- Improve provision for Reception children by:
 - developing a more challenging, stimulating and exciting curriculum so that children can select their own activities, investigate and explore, and enjoy purposeful structured learning and play indoors and outdoors.

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

Pupils' attainment varies from year to year, being heavily influenced by fluctuations in ability within very small year groups. In 2009 attainment was above average at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics and exceptionally high in science. Lessons are productive and purposeful so that pupils build knowledge and skills at a good rate. Pupils behave exceptionally well and are eager to learn and to support each other in their learning. The individual needs of pupils are met successfully, which enables pupils of various ages and ability levels to make good progress. Many hands go up to answer teachers' questions and pupils waste no time in starting work. They learn effectively and say they love their lessons, particularly when they are actively involved. They respond very well to praise and listen carefully. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. Work is skilfully adapted to meet their specific needs so that they, too, make good progress. Pupils are great enthusiasts for their school and their sense of enjoyment and achievement is impressive.

Pupils' attendance is good and they say they feel safe in school at all times. They are very aware of what safety means in their own lives, especially with regard to using the internet sensibly. Year 5 and 6 pupils have devised their own internet safety posters. Pupils have conducted a health and safety audit of the school site and presented their findings to the governors. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to take care of their health through running the daily fruit tuck shop, growing vegetables in their school garden and by taking every advantage of the many opportunities for sport the school offers. They also enjoy collecting eggs supplied by the school's three laying chickens. Pupils' outstanding behaviour creates an extremely positive and welcoming environment and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy raising money for charities and being tour guides, librarians and school gardeners. All pupils are school councillors and work on various committees. Pupils' good academic progress and strong development of personal qualities prepare them well for later life. They leave school with a firm belief in their own abilities and a strong desire to learn more.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?

Staff use their good knowledge and understanding of the pupils to modify and adapt their teaching to match pupils' needs. Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning helps staff to maintain a calm atmosphere in lessons which is conducive to good learning. They are well supported by a team of skilled teaching assistants who make an important contribution to pupils' learning. Good systems for assessing pupils' progress from term to term enable teachers to pitch activities at the right level for different groups. There are a few rare occasions when more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their writing.

The school is in the process of reviewing and revising its curriculum planning. There are only brief overviews of curriculum coverage, which do not describe in sufficient detail what key skills are to be covered and when. Senior leaders agree that more detailed plans for each area of learning are required to support staff more effectively. Nevertheless, the curriculum enrichment activities provided by this small school are superb. One parent, speaking for many, comments, 'The activities offered are excellent with provision made for all ages.' Pupils benefit considerably from the extensive range of visits, visitors and extra events. Year 5 and 6 pupils enthusiastically described a recent residential visit to Bristol where they enjoyed a variety of activities including a visit to the Banksy exhibition. Art is a key feature and the printing and pattern work in the style of William Morris and Georgia O'Keefe by Year 3 and 4 pupils is of a very high standard.

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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Strong liaison with external agencies underpins the good-quality care for vulnerable pupils. Pupils say they feel exceptionally well supported by all staff. There are good arrangements for settling pupils in and for easing the move to secondary school at the end of Year 6. The before- and after-school clubs are run by friendly, smiling staff who ensure pupils receive high-quality extended care.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, governing body and staff are totally committed to ensuring that all pupils are challenged to achieve as highly as they can. There are effective management systems in place to encourage this. Pupils’ progress and attainment is tracked carefully and the monitoring of pupils’ learning by all staff is developing steadily. The school development plan correctly states that monitoring by subject leaders is an area for improvement. Literacy leadership is of a high quality, as the coordinator has extensive knowledge and expertise and leads the subject with infectious enthusiasm. Lesson monitoring by the headteacher is focused on school priorities and identifies areas to improve, which are followed up. The school’s partnership with parents is steadfast and the vast majority hold very positive views of the school. For instance, one parent wrote, ‘The school is a happy place and the headteacher and staff go to great lengths to provide an all-round education.’ The school’s partnerships with others are excellent. The headteacher is dedicated to broadening the pupils’ experience of the wider world through strong and effective links with other primary and secondary schools so that they are never isolated by the rural nature of their location. These highly effective partnerships result in collaborative planning, shared expertise and joint funding for projects. For instance staff from a local secondary school provide weekly French lessons for Key Stage 2 pupils. Community cohesion is promoted well and there are good plans in hand to broaden pupils’ understanding of life for children in different parts of England. Safeguarding of pupils is well managed and organised by staff and governors, and all requirements were fully met at the time of the inspection. They succeed in ensuring that there is no discrimination on any grounds and all pupils achieve equally well. Staff and governors, spearheaded by the steely determined leadership of the headteacher, make a strong team whose positive approach to challenges sets a very good model for the pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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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	1
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

Children join the Reception Year with skills broadly as expected although the range is wide. Some children's language and communication development and their knowledge and understanding of the world are lower when compared to children of a similar age. They make satisfactory progress and attain the expected levels in most areas of learning at the start of Year 1. The school has extensive grounds and children spend time outdoors most days. However, the outdoor activities tend to be mainly focused on developing children's physical development as they ride bikes and explore the tyre park. There are limited chances for children to experience other areas of their learning and development outdoors. In the classroom activities are often set out for the children and this restricts their opportunities to select their own resources or initiate their own learning. This also restricts their ability to become independent learners. The role-play area provides satisfactory opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the wider world, but is not sufficiently inviting or interesting to extend the children's social and language skills. There is a good emphasis on the development of basic skills, such as phonics, to help children's early reading and writing skills. Adults have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the learning and welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children normally behave well, but, on a few occasions, they can become boisterous when their work and play activities lack structure and adults do not participate in their play. Adults are developing sound procedures for observing children and assessing their progress, and are beginning to use this information in their planning to meet children's individual needs. Policies and procedures are adequate as staff become increasingly familiar with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are good relationships with parents and

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excellent links with the on-site playgroup so children have a smooth, happy start to school.

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

Over half of the parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. All of these parents and carers feel that their children enjoy school and that their children are kept very safe. All the parents and carers are happy with their children’s experiences at this school. A very small number of parents raised concerns but there were no issues which were relevant to the school as a whole. Parents’ individual concerns were summarised and reported to the school without identifying any individual. Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with the parents’ and carers’ positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lydeard St Lawrence Community 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 75 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	52	21	46	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	74	12	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	43	24	52	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	33	29	63	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	46	22	48	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	46	24	52	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	70	14	30	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)	29	63	15	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	41	25	54	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	54	20	43	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	41	23	50	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	30	65	13	28	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	48	23	50	0	0	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.



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lydeard St Lawrence Community Primary School, Taunton, TA4 3SF.

We enjoyed visiting your school and I am writing to thank you for two interesting and happy days. Thank you to the guides who did a brilliant job of showing me around the school and to all those who talked to us. We agree completely with you and your parents that you go to a good school.

These are the things we found out.

- You make good progress and reach above-average standards.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard and play very happily together.
- You are taught well and your lessons are usually fun and interesting.
- Your headteacher is a good leader.
- You love all the sports activities and are proud of the many cups you have won.
- You are well cared for in school and you say you feel very safe.
- Your school works very effectively with other schools to make sure your education is successful.

We think there are two main areas where the school can improve. It needs to:

- look carefully at the way staff plan your learning and make sure you all do really well in writing
- improve the way the Reception children learn and play so that they have a really good start to school life.

You can play your part as well by continuing to work hard and by keeping up your excellent standard of behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox

Lead inspector

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