

Lethbridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132193
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	341304
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2010
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	490
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jokie Bakker
Headteacher	Ray Norman
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They spent just under two-thirds of their time looking at pupils' learning, including visits to 21 lessons and observations of 16 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at school self-evaluation documents, external monitoring reports and development planning. Seventy-four parental questionnaires were analysed as well as those from school staff and the pupils.

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

- the degree to which senior leaders, governors and all staff are driving the school forward, given recent senior staff changes
- the impact of improved planning and assessment on the progress of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of the balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning in Reception
- the review and updating of provision to enable the successful promotion of community cohesion.

Information about the school

Lethbridge Primary School is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with small numbers from a variety of different minority ethnic groups. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. A below average proportion have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these pupils have behavioural and emotional needs or some form of learning difficulty.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are included in the Reception classes. They also attend the Bright Stars out of school childcare sessions which are privately managed. This childcare provision was not inspected by the team.

The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2009 and there have been recent changes to the senior leadership 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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Lethbridge Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. They make the expected progress and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. The school has adapted successfully to the recent change in the leadership structure and staff and governors are keen to make the necessary improvements. While the quality of teaching has been inconsistent across the school, improvements are evident and there are now more good quality lessons than previously. However, there is room for even more improvement, as senior leaders' evaluations of the school's work show. In a significant proportion of lessons, teachers control the work too tightly, which does not give pupils enough opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities as independent, well-motivated and sensible learners. They have too few chances to self-evaluate their work or to identify how they can improve it. Thus, achievement is sometimes capped.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is geared strongly towards the development of literacy and numeracy. At present, the curriculum is not focused enough on meeting every pupil's individual learning needs. While there are strengths in art, music and drama, which capture pupils' enthusiasms well, in subjects such as English and mathematics the approach is less adventurous, and can be very similar for every pupil. Thus, while equal opportunities are assured, this is at a satisfactory rather than good level of effectiveness.

The capacity to maintain improvement is satisfactory at present as there is appropriate drive and ambition to make things even better than they are. School self-evaluation is accurate, so leaders at all levels know what must be improved. They know, for example, about the limitations of the curriculum. The new leadership team and subject leaders have the general responsibilities of their role specified, although their accountability for pupils' achievement is not spelled out as clearly. The track record of the school in raising attainment and pupils' progress is satisfactory and in some cases, such as provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, improvement has been good. This has led to the work in Reception being among the school's strengths because the children make good progress there.

Governors give a good steer to the school's work. They are probing in their reviews and evaluations of its performance and ensure it meets its responsibilities to promote community cohesion well and ensure every pupil is safeguarded effectively. The care, guidance and support given pupils are good and enable vulnerable pupils, for instance, to benefit from their education without undue worries. During the central parts of lessons, and when pupils are withdrawn to work away from the classroom, teaching assistants lend good support to the pupils in their charge. In a few lessons they do not have a full role and can be passive rather than active in support of learning.

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Pupils behave well and enjoy school, as shown by the above average attendance levels. By the end of Year 6 they are soundly prepared for secondary education because their attainment is better than expected for their age. There are good links with communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom and across the world, which contribute effectively to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and the quality of teaching to meet the school's revised target of 75% good lessons by:
 - giving pupils more, and consistent, opportunities to work independently
 - making sure pupils' learning targets are reflected fully in lessons and in marking work, and that pupils self-assess their own progress.
- Ensure the curriculum meets pupils' individual needs fully:
 - develop the role of teaching assistants to capitalise at all times on their good skills of supporting individual and groups of pupils.
 - Define the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all leaders so they are accountable for the progress made by pupils and the standards they reach.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The school has maintained pupils' above average results in national assessments since its previous inspection. Year on year there has been a gradual rise in attainment, especially in writing. At the same time, the starting point of children in Reception has fallen, so it now matches the expectations held of children of this age, rather than showing the higher levels of the past. The main challenge now is for the school to ensure that consistently good progress is made in every class from Reception through to the end of Year 6.

A positive start has been made to this quest. Provision in Reception is good, so the children make rapid strides in their learning. There is some variability in progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, although this is lessening. Pupils are keen to learn and work is usually purposeful in lessons, although it is not always productive enough, especially where the expectations of pupils' independence in learning have not been established firmly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, and where there is tailored individual support, progress is often good. In some lessons support for these pupils is not consistently of the same quality or effectiveness, particularly at the beginning and ending of lessons. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar satisfactory progress to the other pupils in their class.

It is evident at all times of day that most pupils enjoy school. They are able to explain fluently and confidently why this is the case. They recognise what works well in school and have good ideas for its development. They have good appreciation of the need to maintain healthy and safe lifestyles, for example as shown by Year 6 in their lesson on

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substance misuse. Relationships are good between pupils themselves and with the staff. The pupils come to school wanting to learn.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The school expects 70 % of lessons to be of good quality. This target has not yet been reached due to the inconsistency in lesson quality across the school. The school comes closest to meeting it in Reception and in Year 4. Improvements to teaching, however, mean the target is within reach. Senior leaders know that for the school to show its full potential a revised target of 75%, including some outstanding teaching, is necessary. Staff are resolved to surpass the original target and meet that increased figure quickly. There are already qualities in teaching and the curriculum that will give momentum to improvement. Planning is detailed and usually related to pupils' age and ability levels and what these mean in terms of setting different work to meet needs. Subject knowledge is dependable, time is usually used effectively and explanation and questioning are clearly expressed. The best lessons also show from the first minute that the pupils are expected to decide for themselves how to approach the work, choose

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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their own indicators of successful achievement and review, often with other pupils, how well the work has progressed. In such lessons the teaching assistants combine support for individuals and groups with observational assessment of how well different pupils are succeeding. This information is shared clearly with the teacher both during and at the end of the lesson. It is evident, however that some lessons are not like this and that then, the pupils are much more dependent on adults for the progress they make.

The curriculum is supported by a programme of out of school activities that broaden pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding successfully. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and ensures they develop into pleasant, polite and confident children. While academically, the equality of opportunity is satisfactory, the school promotes social and personal equality effectively. The Inclusion Manager and Child Protection Coordinator are the key players in this work. They have appropriate action plans to make sure equality of opportunity is maximised on all fronts and good determination to succeed. Already there are improvements in the progress of some key pupils, especially among the vulnerable, that show just how positively the good care, guidance and support is encouraging increased achievement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The restructuring of leadership has been accomplished successfully. The school's past strengths have been sustained and consolidated and there is good resolve to tackle remaining areas of weakness. Leaders have the necessary ambition to drive things forward, although the limitations of their role are clear. Leaders sometimes pursue their own improvement priorities which they see as necessary to underpin their responsibilities. This can lead to inconsistencies in the quality of the school's work because one member of staff may do things differently from another. The time is right for leaders at all levels to establish explicitly the roles and responsibilities that will enable each team member to contribute fully to the collective improvement of the satisfactory rate of pupils' progress and quality of teaching.

The school works in satisfactory partnership with parents and carers. As shown below, some parents and carers would like to see a strengthened partnership. The school itself is ready for this development. It has appropriate plans to build on events such as the successful parent and carer assemblies and open evenings in order to improve communications and assist parents and carers to support their children's learning

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effectively.

Governors have ensured the school meets its responsibilities to promote community cohesion well by making regular reviews of its effectiveness and updating procedures as necessary. Similarly, governors play a central role in checking that procedures for safeguarding all children meet current government requirements and that they are dependable and rigorous. Because staff, like the governors, are vigilant, safeguarding is effective. The same holds for tackling any form of discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy being in Reception and they work and play together well. Activities are provided that ensure a good blend between work led by adults and that which is chosen and managed by the children. In this way, the Early Years Foundation Stage is a step ahead of the rest of the school. Leadership of the stage is good and has led to great improvements. However, staff recognise there is room to improve the presentation of the classrooms so they reflect the good quality provision more clearly and also to check that every activity, such as the use of the sand tray, has a clearly planned learning purpose.

Despite the necessity for further improvement in these things, the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage is a key strength of the school. During the one hour session observed by inspectors in the first morning of the inspection, the children showed 'an amazing response to instructions ...good independent (learning) skills ...a hive of activity ... (and they) mix remarkably well together.' The activities at this time included the use

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of wheeled toys and problem-solving work to find how many teddies could fit on the smallest book. The children chose their own activities confidently, the only limitation being the influence of bad weather on their work outside due to the lack of suitable cover. This session showed why the children make good progress and reach above average skills and knowledge by the time they move to Year 1.

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

Generally, parents and carers hold positive views of the school. However, a significant proportion expressed concerns about how effectively the school works with them to support their children's learning and the information provided about their progress. The school recognises that these parents and carers have a valid point, and is committed to improve the partnership with them. All parents and carers believe the school keeps their children safe and helps them to be healthy and prepare effectively for the future, and inspectors agree that these aspects are undertaken well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lethbridge 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 490 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	36	43	58	5	7	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	39	51	37	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	32	38	51	11	14	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	22	47	62	10	13	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	20	26	47	62	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	30	44	58	8	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	38	42	55	2	3	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)	25	33	41	54	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	20	49	64	5	7	5	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	21	49	64	5	7	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	17	39	51	16	21	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	28	44	58	10	13	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	37	40	53	7	9	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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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29 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lethbridge Primary School, Swindon SN1 4BY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We were impressed by your good behaviour, politeness and helpfulness.

We think your school gives you a satisfactory education and that it has a number of good points.

- You make the necessary progress and reach above average standards.
- Children in Reception learn well and build skills and knowledge successfully.
- You like the adults and other pupils in school and your attendance is good.
- When your lessons are good you work hard and learn a lot of new things.
- All the adults in school look after you well and make sure you are happy in your work.
- Your headteacher and the staff want you to do well and are ready to make some important improvements.

These improvements will help you reach even higher standards more quickly. We have listed three things the school should do that are especially important in this.

- Make sure more lessons are exciting and give you more chances to talk about your learning targets and plan how you will approach your work.
- Improve the satisfactory curriculum so that the work is right for each one of you and not always the same as for everyone else.
- Give school leaders the job of checking that you make the best progress and reach the highest possible standards.

We know you will help your teachers make these improvements. You can do this by showing just how well you can be trusted to work on your own and with other pupils. We believe you can do this because you want to get the best from your education and you enjoy your time in school.

We wish you good luck in your school work.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector

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