

Lynch Hill (Foundation Primary) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109933
Local Authority	Slough
Inspection number	310145
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Nigel Grimshaw

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	558
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Matt Erratt
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Coffey
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	Garrard Road Slough SL2 2AN
Telephone number	01753 524170
Fax number	01753 691583

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a larger than average primary school. A higher than average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. More than a quarter of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and well over half of them do not speak English as their first language. There are seventeen different ethnic groupings represented in the school. Numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above average. The majority have moderate learning difficulties, mainly reflecting problems with speech and language, but there is a significant group with identified behavioural difficulties. The school provides a full range of extended services before and after school, including a well attended Breakfast Club.

The school has gained many awards, such as the Healthy School Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People status; and is recognised as by the government as one of a select group of 'National Support Schools' encouraged to help other schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents, pupils, staff and governors are all justifiably proud of this outstanding school. Pupils are enabled to flourish both socially and academically. One parent wrote, 'I feel that Lynch Hill is an excellent school. It is led very effectively by a strong team and promotes and achieves high standards of education and behaviour'.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and then exceptionally good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, building on the solid foundations embedded in the Early Years. Standards improve quickly as the pupils move through the school, and are exceptionally high by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve so well because expectations are high, the teaching is outstanding, and because they receive excellent support from the teaching assistants. As the headteacher said, 'Failure at Lynch Hill is not an option for the pupils. They can all succeed'. They enjoy their work because they benefit from a rich and interesting curriculum that makes learning fun and exciting. Teachers are successful at meeting pupils' differing needs because they know their pupils so well. Even in outstanding schools there is always something that can be improved and at Lynch Hill a relative weakness is that pupils do not have enough opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Members of staff give pupils excellent personal and academic support and, from an early age, teach them good values. Pupils quickly learn to respect each other and adults. They are very polite and welcoming to visitors and develop extremely positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils' exemplary behaviour is a major factor in their successful learning and creates a very positive atmosphere in lessons and around school. One quote from a parent, that was typical of many, was, 'I am overjoyed with the school. All the staff have a great rapport with the children'. Pupils are keen to carry out helpful tasks and take these responsibilities very seriously. They say that they feel safe and that the very rare instances of bullying are effectively dealt with. School councillors are very conscientious and make an excellent contribution to the school community. For instance, they have planned healthy menus with the school meal providers.

The school has excellent links to the local community, including the Parish Council where ideas from the children for improving the locality are considered. The school has established strong links with parents. One parent summed up the almost unanimous views of all by writing, 'I feel that my children have achieved so much since starting at Lynch Hill.'

The school is so successful because it is led and managed exceptionally well. The headteacher and other members of staff are passionate about 'their school' and do all they can to ensure that pupils fulfil their potential. The governors are knowledgeable and provide excellent support. The school is very clear about its strengths, although it tends to be a little modest in one or two judgements, reflecting the very high expectations of the headteacher and senior leadership team. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and support their colleagues well. There are ambitious plans for further school development, and the headteacher and governors are exceptionally well placed to realise their aspirations.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities that are well below those expected of three- and four-year-olds. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, which is outstanding. Progress is good because the quality of teaching is good and the teamwork is extremely effective. However, in the Reception Unit, there are not enough opportunities for children to initiate and develop their own writing. Good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage ensure that provision is monitored regularly. The assessment and evaluation of children's progress has improved still further this year with the introduction of a new recording system that helps teachers to plan work to meet the specific needs of each individual child.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities across the school, including the youngest children, to write independently and extensively in other subject areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is excellent. The level of children's skills when they start school is lower than those normally found. From this low starting point, pupils make outstanding progress because of very high expectations and high quality teaching, academic guidance and support. By the end of Year 2, they are attaining standards above national averages and leave the school at the age of eleven with exceptionally high standards. Pupils consistently meet or exceed their very challenging targets in national tests at the end of Year 6. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well with most reaching nationally expected levels by the time they leave the school. Pupils that are more able are successfully challenged, and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6 is very high in all core subjects. Pupils for whom English is not their first language also make outstanding progress because of the excellent support provided by the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

'My child is happy and safe and enjoying learning' was one parent's comment. The pupils enjoy activities and demonstrate an excellent awareness of how to stay safe. Their general demeanour around school shows they are very happy to come to school and their good attendance confirms this. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning and each other, and their behaviour is excellent. At the breakfast club pupils behave very responsibly and develop very good skills in socialising and being independent. At lunchtime many take the healthy option, serving themselves from the salad bar. They know what they should avoid if they want to maintain a healthy lifestyle. For instance, Year 5 pupils created persuasive arguments about the dangers of smoking. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are all excellent and pupils explain their views about understanding and being tolerant of others extremely well. Throughout the school pupils are developing skills that will benefit their future. The youngest children cultivate their own garden area and decide what to do with the produce. The school council has been proactive in developing the outdoor environment and considering how to fund its ideas and initiatives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers carefully plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. High quality relationships create a positive learning environment. Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers provide an excellent balance of direct instruction and opportunities for pupils to practice their skills through investigation and problem-solving. This was evident in an outstanding Year 2 mathematics lesson where pupils investigated how best to divide money using fractions. Throughout the school, activities such as role-play and drama are used exceptionally well to encourage pupils to express themselves and to extend their thinking by sharing ideas with others. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently and provide clear guidance for improvement. There are very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and present it to others, although in a few lessons, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to write more extensively and independently. Assessments of the pupils' performance are thorough and consistent, so teachers are able to set challenging targets for pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Personal, social and health education is promoted extremely well. Subjects are linked well through themes so that learning is practical and engaging. For example, Year 6 pupils have undertaken an in depth study of the Holocaust. This has been thought provoking and absorbing for the pupils, successfully combining skills learned in history, design and technology, geography and literacy, to produce models, artwork and evocative writing. There is scope to develop more opportunities across the school for pupils to write at greater length in other subjects. The strong emphasis on the creative curriculum is reflected in the very high standard of artwork displayed around the school, including art and sculptures inspired by the work of famous artists, and the excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their drama and music skills. The curriculum is enhanced by visits, including residential trips, and excellent business links with companies that invite pupils to see the world of work. The school provides an outstanding range of activities outside the school day. There are excellent links with the church and local community. Pupils regularly use the local area, for example, when surveying the environment as part of their science and geography work. Pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well, and this has been a significant improvement since the school's last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent nurturing and caring environment, where everyone is valued and all pupils' needs are met. Outstanding levels of support ensure all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, participate in the wide range of activities and make outstanding progress in their personal development. Pupils with particular skills, for example in sport or drama, are also given every opportunity to develop their talents. Statutory procedures are in place to ensure that everyone is kept safe and free from harm and staff are swift to act if incidents occur. There are very efficient systems to ensure excellent behaviour and the pupils understand what to do if they are concerned or worried. 'Nurture groups' and mentors provide outstanding support for pupils who are more vulnerable. Rigorous approaches are taken to

ensure pupils attend school regularly and certificates are awarded for good attendance. Pupils know their targets for the next challenging steps in their learning and can explain these very well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher has a clear vision and gives a strong sense of direction, with a focus on raising standards and on promoting the care and well-being of pupils. She is well supported by the senior leadership team and subject leaders. The school is well managed, and runs smoothly, enabling teachers to focus on pupils' learning. The school makes excellent use of its resources, including staff. Monitoring information is evaluated and used well to establish appropriate priorities and inform improvement plans. Parents' views are regularly taken into account. Governors are committed to the school and provide outstanding support and challenge. Their awareness of their responsibility to hold it to account is good. For example, they have established useful links with subject leaders, to help them evaluate the quality of education being provided.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

03 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lynch Hill (Foundation Primary) School, Slough, SL2 2AN

On behalf of your inspectors I would like to thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. You are very polite and extremely well behaved and we agree with you that your school is excellent and that it does a lot to help you to achieve so well.

We were glad to hear that you enjoy school so much. Your teachers and other staff care about you and work extremely hard to help you to be successful. You have excellent attitudes towards your work and really good teaching helps you to learn well and reach very high standards by the end of Year 6. Your teachers plan carefully to make your learning interesting and fun. They organise many interesting activities and let you take part in a great number of clubs and visits. You are lucky to have such a broad range of opportunities to develop your skills in many areas, and we thought your artwork was absolutely marvellous. Your headteacher, other members of staff and the governors work closely together, lead the school very well, and are always trying to make it even better. Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school because they also think it is excellent.

We have asked the school to give you more opportunities to use your writing skills more often in other subjects. Some of you are already doing this in your work on themes such as 'The Holocaust' but we think that you could have even more chances to write at length.

Thank you once again for your help and friendliness. We hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and we wish you and the school all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Grimshaw

Lead Inspector