



Livingstone Lower School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109432
Local Authority BEDFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 288368
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Clapham Road
School category	Community		Bedford
Age range of pupils	4–9		Bedfordshire MK41 7LG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01234 352879
Number on roll (school)	145	Fax number	01234 216253
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev Roger Stoke
		Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Sharpe
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2002		

Age group 4–9	Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007	Inspection number 288368
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector

Description of the school

Livingstone Lower is a smaller than average primary school which provides education for pupils from ages four to nine. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds with White British, Bangladeshi, Black African and those from other white backgrounds being the largest groups. Over half of the pupil population speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. During the past two years, the school's roll has grown from around 100 to the present number of 145. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the normal starting points has been higher than average and this has further increased recently. Many pupils join the school with little or no English. A few pupils join having received no previous schooling. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is well below national expectations.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Livingstone Lower is a good school providing good quality education for all its pupils. Pupils achieve well and they make good progress in their personal development. Parents hold positive views about the school and have very few concerns.

Good leadership and management contribute significantly to the school's effectiveness. An experienced headteacher provides strong leadership and educational direction. Other leadership roles are well developed and effectively shared. Good leadership has resulted in consistency in assessment and in teaching and learning. Teamwork among the staff is good and there is a clear commitment to doing the best for all the pupils. The curriculum and support systems have been effectively revised to meet the needs of a changing pupil intake. Through rigorous self-evaluation, this school has a clear understanding of its performance and takes decisive action to bring about improvements.

Children in Reception get off to a good start and make good progress in all areas of learning because of effective provision in the Foundation Stage. Good teaching and learning enable pupils to make good progress throughout the school. Even pupils who are at the school for a short time make good gains in their learning. Effective assessment means that teachers have a clear picture of what pupils know and can do. They use this information well to match activities to pupils' abilities and needs so that they are challenged and learn at a good pace. Teachers' clear explanations and questioning promote learning. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted well but occasionally opportunities are missed in lessons. Standards in Year 4 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science.

Good care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. Effective induction arrangements enable new pupils to settle quickly. In this positive and welcoming school community, all pupils are valued, cared for and their needs are carefully assessed. Their personal development is good. The guidance and support for pupils learning English as an additional language, those with learning difficulties, and the gifted and talented are all good. Pupils clearly enjoy their time at school and have positive attitudes to learning. The effective curriculum is well tailored to pupils' needs and is enriched by a good range of additional activities. The school works hard to improve attendance but this is still below average because too many families have extended excursions abroad. Pupils are friendly, polite and relate well to others. They show appreciation and respect for different backgrounds and cultures. Clear expectations and positive rewards give rise to good behaviour. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the current work to improve attendance.
- Within the context of the good teaching, ensure that opportunities for speaking and listening are always maximised.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Across the school, pupils' achievement is good, including those with learning difficulties. Children in Reception make good progress but, because of their low starting points, not all reach expected standards. Standards in Year 2 have been generally average in reading, writing and mathematics. These dipped to below average in 2006 because of a significant number of pupils, many of whom had little or no English, joining the year group later than the usual time of entry. In addition, a few higher attaining pupils left. New arrivals make good progress from their low starting points. Effective assessment means that the needs of new pupils are swiftly identified and good guidance and support are provided. Good teaching, effective support and a relevant curriculum enable pupils to make good progress. Highly effective assessment and tracking systems indicate that pupils who receive most of their schooling at Livingstone tend to reach higher standards than those who are there for shorter periods.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In assemblies, pupils celebrate the positive qualities of their fellow pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is demonstrated by their keen participation in activities. The importance of leading healthy lifestyles receives good attention and most pupils try to adopt healthy lifestyles. They take regular exercise and show a sound knowledge of healthy diets. Members of the school council represent pupils well and have made valuable contributions to improving outside play facilities and school meals. Pupils make positive contributions to the wider community by raising funds for well-known charities. Pupils make good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. These along with their good social skills prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Despite the school's efforts to promote good attendance, it is still below average. This adversely affects the progress made by some pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding practice. Effective teaching contributes significantly to pupils' good progress. Teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently to illustrate key learning points in a stimulating way. Pupils are enthusiastic and respond well to their teachers. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to acquire new vocabulary and discuss their work in pairs. This develops their language skills well. Occasionally opportunities for discussion are missed and new words are not sufficiently explored to ensure pupils understand them. Assessment is used effectively

to match tasks to pupils' different abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are challenged, their interest is maintained, and they make good progress. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and provide good quality support to those who need it. The pace of learning and pupils' concentration can decline sometimes when introductions are overlong.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' good progress and to their good personal development. It rightly pays clear attention to language, literacy and numeracy skills. ICT provision is much improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils and staff use this effectively to enhance teaching and learning in a range of subjects. Good links between subjects are making pupils' learning enjoyable and relevant. Provision for the gifted and talented is good and helps to ensure that these pupils are extended. Pupils benefit from visits to places of educational interest. A popular residential trip for the older pupils provides new opportunities for outdoor activities such as archery, climbing and problem solving. The 'after school club', football, tag rugby and music tuition contribute to pupils' interest and enjoyment. The new Foundation Stage accommodation and a wellplanned curriculum give children a good start. A few parents have indicated that they would like more information about what their children are learning and the school is keen to tackle this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are effective procedures to help ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Most pupils are responsible and adopt safe practices. Induction arrangements for children in Reception and for new arrivals in other classes are good. Pupils settle quickly as a result. Well-targeted provision for pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition contributes to their good progress. Effective support programmes are designed for pupils with specific learning needs. The school is closely working with various agencies to improve attendance but this is only slowly bringing about improvements. Assessment data are used well to set challenging targets for individuals. Pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve particularly in English and mathematics. The marking of pupils' work is good. Praise is given for good work and clear guidance helps pupils to improve. Assessment, marking and target setting have improved considerably since the last inspection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

At all levels, leadership and management are successfully promoting good achievement and good personal development. Leadership responsibilities have been effectively distributed and teachers have been empowered to lead and develop their areas. A

positive 'can do' attitude among the staff helps to ensure that the school moves forward and that a good quality education is provided.

The school has a clear overview of its performance because of good self- evaluation. Rigorous assessment and tracking mean that it has a clear picture of how well each individual is doing. The school's judgements about its performance in key areas are modest but this is mainly because of the high expectations of the headteacher and staff. Data analysis is thorough and findings from self-evaluation are used well to guide improvements. School development planning is clear and more focused than at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is effectively monitored and developed. Staff share good practice. As one teacher said, 'We all learn from each other'.

Governance is good and provides an effective blend of challenge and support. Since the last inspection, pupils' good achievement has been maintained and provision has steadily improved. There is good capacity for further improvements. Leaders are aware of the pressing need to improve attendance. Overall the school gives good value for money.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

2 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Livingstone Lower School, Clapham Road, Bedford, MK41 7LG

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you what I found out. Livingstone is a good school and one you can be proud of.

These things are strengths of the school

- You clearly enjoy school.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- Teaching is good, which is why you learn so much.
- New pupils settle into the school quickly.
- You are making good progress particularly in English and mathematics.
- Your behaviour is generally good and you get on well with others.
- The staff know you well and you receive good care and support from them.
- The school is well run by your headteacher and other senior staff.
- Your parents are pleased with the school.

There are a few things the school has been asked to improve

- Too many of you miss out on the school's activities because you are away from school too often.
- Your teachers should make sure that you always have good opportunities to discuss your work and new words.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts

Lead inspector