

Lent Rise Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110319
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288630
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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 on roll	
School	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary Bentley
Headteacher	Mrs Brenda Bigland CBE
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2001
School address	Coulson Way Burnham Slough SL1 7NP
Telephone number	01628 662913
Fax number	01628 669200

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large, popular school serves a socially diverse area. Although the large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, a wide range of minority ethnic groups is represented. A larger than usual proportion of pupils is learning English as an additional language, although none is at an early stage of acquiring the language. More pupils are identified with learning difficulties than are found in most schools. The school has received many national awards, including the Charter, Quality, Active and Arts Marks and Investors in People. In addition, the school has been awarded the ICT (information and communication technology) Mark and is a Primary Focus School and a Leading Aspect School for ICT.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Lent Rise is an outstanding school in which pupils make excellent progress to reach exceptionally high standards. High quality teaching, care and leadership mean that pupils, whatever their ability, background or gender, are able to fulfil their potential. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of what the school offers, one summing up the views of many when describing the school as, 'Excellent, well run, with high standards and a sense of pride.' Pupils respond extremely well. They enjoy school, behave impeccably and are eager to learn.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years (Reception) because of outstanding teaching and planning. They achieve exceptionally well and standards, overall, are above those expected by the end of Reception. This rapid progress continues across the school and standards are exceptionally high by the end of Year 6.

Inspirational leadership from the headteacher is the driving force behind the school's success. Her vision for excellence in all that the school provides is shared by staff and governors, who work tirelessly to achieve this aim. The level of their success is reflected in pupils' excellent academic achievement and the rapid progress they make in their personal development. The school's work is monitored rigorously and complacency is not tolerated. Much is expected of staff who, in turn, have very high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Strengths are celebrated and areas for development, for example when successfully raising the standard of writing, are tackled ruthlessly. Teachers keep a very close check on the progress of individual pupils and use this information exceptionally well to plan lessons that have the challenge or support needed by pupils of differing ability. Managers analyse the results from national tests and other assessments thoroughly. The school recognises that systems to identify trends in the performance of different groups of pupils are too time consuming and improvements are under way.

The school provides an excellent curriculum and is at the cutting edge of using information and communication technology (ICT). Provision is outstanding, standards are high and pupils use their ICT skills very effectively in other subjects. Exceptional links are established with schools across Europe. This contributes to pupils' well developed cultural awareness and, along with their outstanding progress in basic skills, prepares them exceptionally well as citizens of the future. They have a very keen awareness of how to lead healthy and safe lifestyles and make outstanding contributions to their school and the wider community. Pupils appreciate the help they are given by staff and the steps the school takes to ensure their safety. The school works very closely with outside agencies to support pupils in need, including those with learning difficulties. The school has received national recognition for its leadership and for its work in ICT but, as one parent reports, 'With all the accolades the school deservedly receives, never are the children forgotten.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the use of assessment data to identify trends in the performance of different groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter Reception with attainment that overall is below national expectations. Over half of the children have not received formal education before starting at Lent Rise. All children

make excellent progress as a result of outstanding teaching and a stimulating curriculum. By the end of the Foundation Stage, performance is above expectations particularly in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils continue to make outstanding progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 6 they are reaching exceptionally high standards. This has been the case in the mathematics and science national tests for the last two years. The school identified that standards in writing were not up to their own high expectations and their analysis revealed that creative writing was a relative weakness. Effective and imaginative strategies, backed up by good staff training and rigorous monitoring, led to marked improvements. The school's tracking information shows that improvement has continued this year, and standards in English are now exceptionally high, too. A particular strength of the school is the use of ICT, and this is reflected in pupils' outstanding skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This makes a significant contribution to their academic progress and the standards they reach. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life, participate enthusiastically, attend well and very positive relationships help them to thrive. They rise to meet teachers' high expectations by behaving impeccably and showing mature levels of courtesy and responsibility. Pupils express their feelings thoughtfully, openly and, sometimes, movingly. They have an exceptionally secure grasp of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and a very strong awareness of how to stay safe in and out of school. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community and further afield. They carry out wide ranging responsibilities conscientiously through, for example, membership of the influential school council, recycling materials and taking part in the school's health and safety checks. Pupils are confident communicators who enjoy working as part of a team. This, together with their organisational skills, responsible attitudes and excellent progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT, prepares them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Highly effective teaching means that pupils learn extremely well and achieve high standards. Staff are like-minded in their pursuit of excellence and are very analytical of their performance. Very capable teaching assistants play their part, particularly in supporting those with learning difficulties. Much of the school's success is founded upon excellent lesson planning, based on the exemplary use of assessment information. This ensures that work is well matched to pupils' capabilities and builds well on what they have already learned. Teachers are very clear about what pupils are expected to learn. Perceptive and challenging questioning enables them to assess and extend pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. For their part, pupils work hard, concentrate well and are eager to do their best. They think carefully about their answers and draw thoughtfully on what they have learned in previous lessons. Excellent marking contributes to pupils' very clear understanding of how well they are doing and how they might improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and contributes very significantly to pupils' all-round development. In Reception, there is a good balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to learn through play. The strengths in ICT have been recognised nationally and the school acts as a resource for other schools in the region. Pupils throughout the school are enthused and inspired by their experiences using ICT in a range of contexts. For instance, Year 6 pupils create a multi-media presentation about life at Lent Rise, using a range of sophisticated computer programs and equipment. This work is being extended by establishing a radio station, through which pupils will be able to make their own broadcasts. Provision for pupils' personal development is excellent and Lent Rise is a leading school for the Healthy Schools Standard. The school is innovative and constantly searching for ways of improving further through, for example, International Arts weeks and 'news days'. French is taught to all pupils from Reception onwards and is exceptionally well planned. The curriculum is further enriched by a very good range of trips and visits including residential events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are outstanding. The school makes exceptional efforts to meet the needs of all pupils, making very good use of the support offered by a good range of outside agencies and organisations. Procedures to support vulnerable pupils, and those with learning or other needs, are very rigorous and help to ensure that they fulfil their potential. When pupils are facing particularly challenging difficulties, the school works closely with their families and carers to offer comprehensive support. Its commitment to doing this is reflected in the setting up of a well-appointed 'parent-partnership room'. The school continues to review and refine its work in this area. All of the appropriate checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff and other adults in school. The quality of academic guidance offered to pupils is exceptionally good because it ensures that they know exactly how well they are doing and precisely what they need to do in order to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

All staff share the headteacher's determination to provide the best possible education for pupils and give unstintingly of their time to carry out their many leadership roles. This strong teamwork is an important factor in the school's success. For example, excellent leadership and teamwork in the Early Years contributes to the flying start made by the children. School leaders oversee the school's work very effectively. Systems to check on teaching and learning, and evaluate test results and other assessments, are extremely rigorous and wide-ranging. The results are used determinedly to raise standards and ensure that the leaders have a very accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They are particularly successful in tracking the progress made by individual pupils. The evaluation of the performance of different groups of pupils is too time-consuming. This has been recognised by the school and plans are in hand to streamline this use of data. Governors provide excellent support and hold the headteacher and staff to account. The school leaders have sustained a high level of success in recent years and they have the capacity to continue to do so.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

4 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lent Rise Combined School, Coulson Way, Burnham, Slough, SL1 7NP

Many thanks for the way you welcomed us to your school during the recent inspection. We enjoyed very much watching you in lessons and around the school. A special thank you goes to those of you who gave us your views about your school. You gave us lots of helpful information. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

We agree with you, most of your parents and your teachers that yours is an outstanding school. Your work is of a very high standard. One of the reasons you are doing so well is because your headteacher and staff work very hard to give you the very best and do everything to keep you safe, well and able to learn. You play your part, too, because you are so keen to do your best and your behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. There are so many fantastic things happening in school that it is hard just to mention one or two. Your work in ICT is amongst the best we have seen and your links with schools in Europe are impressive. We were very pleased to see that your writing has improved. You and your teachers and the other adults work very well together and we are sure you will continue that improvement. Many of you told us how much you enjoy the clubs and other activities outside of lessons and it is pleasing that so many of you join in.

Even though your school is excellent, your headteacher and staff are determined that it becomes even better. Your teachers keep a very close check on your work, so that those of you who need extra help, or harder work, get it. They use this information really well to set you targets and make sure that you know how you can improve. Your senior staff are now looking at ways of making it easier to check on how different groups of pupils are doing in school.

Once again, thank you very much for your help during the inspection. We are sure that you will carry on working hard and we wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams

Lead inspector