



Larkrise Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123053
Local Authority Oxfordshire
Inspection number 292570
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Earish

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Boundary Brook Road
School category	Community		Oxford
Age range of pupils	3–11		OX4 4AN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01865 721476
Number on roll (school)	310	Fax number	01865 201468
Appropriate authority	The local authority	Headteacher	Mr M Chesterton
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	1–2 November 2006	292570

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school is situated in east Oxford, where social circumstances are less favourable than average. It has recently undergone re-organisation from a first to a primary school. The school admits pupils from a wide variety of social backgrounds. About two thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and thirty are at the very earliest stages of learning English. This number is increasing year-on-year. Attainment when children start school, whether in Nursery or Reception, is exceptionally low. The mobility of pupils is high with an increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Larkrise is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupil's personal development is good. The overwhelming majority of parents agree and believe it is a very caring and friendly school where each child is made to feel special. The headteacher has provided the school with much needed stability during the recent city wide re-organisation of primary education. He has built a team where all adults are working purposefully to raise standards and improve the achievement of all pupils. As one parent wrote, 'I had wondered whether the high fraction of children whose language is not English, and many of whom have traumatised backgrounds, would hold back our bright unilingual boys....but both have thrived academically.' The school's capacity to make further improvements is good.

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Many pupils start school with very weak personal and social skills and very poorly developed speech and language. They make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage but few reach the expected goals by the start of Year 1. Standards are below average by the end of Year 6. Good headway has been made in raising standards in English, mathematics and science. The best progress is made by pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) who achieve well by the time they leave the school. Parents wrote, 'We believe that Larkrise provides a well rounded education in an inclusive environment'. Teaching is satisfactory and there are some good features, especially in the way staff meet the needs of those with learning difficulties and EAL. However, in some lessons the teaching provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently which results in a slower pace of learning, especially in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes.

The curriculum is good. It meets the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who are learning to speak English. Pupils' personal skills are promoted well and they have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They particularly enjoy extra-curricular activities, visits and events such as the Easter School. Older children voluntarily attend school during the Easter holidays to improve their literacy and numeracy.

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are well cared for and feel secure and happy. Teaching assistants, alongside teachers, play a vital part in ensuring this good quality provision. Most pupils now attend regularly, although there is a small proportion whose attendance remains erratic. The school has developed effective systems for judging and tracking how well pupils are doing. This is having a positive impact upon raising standards. Although pupils have targets for improvement, they are not always aware of them, and this limits their understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is an effective leader and is supported well by his senior management team. He shows a strong determination to ensure that all pupils do as well as they possibly can. The role of subject leaders in monitoring quality and standards is under-developed and has resulted in some inconsistent progress. This is recognised by the school and is a priority for

development this year. Governors are supportive and are satisfactory at holding the school to account.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils are aware of their targets so they clearly understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Lift the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers give pupils more opportunities to work independently.
- Develop the monitoring activities of subject leaders to improve the consistency of pupils' progress, especially in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start school with skills and abilities that are very much lower than those expected nationally. They achieve satisfactorily, but few reach the goals that are expected by the start of Year 1.

Standards are just below average by the time pupils leave school and achievement is satisfactory. Standards have improved again this year with a significant increase in the numbers of children reaching level 4 and the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Assessment information recorded by the school shows that progress is inconsistent for some pupils in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes. Pupils from the ethnic minority groups settle well into school life and achieve well. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive well focused support and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding develops well and is good because the school maintains a friendly environment where the needs and cultures of others are respected. As a result, pupils behave well and are courteous to staff and each other. They clearly enjoy their learning because 'school is fun'. Pupils know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and explain that 'fruit and vegetables are good for you and help you learn better'. Attendance is just below the national average and improving. The school has effective systems in place to raise parents' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

Pupils develop their understanding of how to play their part effectively in the school community through, for example, the school council. They believe they have helped make the school a better place for everyone by introducing a Friendship Bench and supporting the introduction of healthier meals. Pupils have good opportunities to become good citizens as they raise money for a variety of good causes. However, there are weaknesses. In order to be outstanding, pupils need to increase their confidence at working independently and taking personal responsibility for their own learning.

Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to acquire literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology ICT skills that will equip them for later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Most lessons have good features including clear learning objectives and work that is well matched to the needs of individuals and groups. However, on some occasions teachers' expectations are not high enough and they fail to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently. This has a direct effect on the quality of pupils' learning and progress slows. ICT is used satisfactorily to both clarify and aid pupils' understanding across the curriculum. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, with the result that pupils eagerly contribute to lessons even when they get the wrong answer. Support staff and teachers work well together and this maximises learning for all pupils. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and EAL enables them to participate fully in school life.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and whose first language is not English. ICT is used effectively across the curriculum to engage and interest pupils in their learning. Provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school has identified the need to increase the opportunities for children to develop their creative skills and is taking action to address this weakness. There are very good partnerships with other schools in Uganda, India and Europe which broadens pupils' knowledge and awareness of other cultural traditions.

The school ensures that all pupils have many opportunities to participate and enjoy a good range of enrichment activities and after school clubs including the breakfast club, Reading Quest and lunchtime sports clubs. Such experiences, together with the school's strong emphasis on raising self esteem and confidence of all pupils are skills that contribute to their future well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school presents a calm and welcoming atmosphere with a strong emphasis upon positive relationships, which is very much valued by pupils and parents alike. As one parent comments, there are 'firm rules that the children understand and stick to.' As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Systems to ensure pupils' health and safety are effective and reviewed regularly. Their academic and personal development is carefully monitored and, as a result, their needs are met well. Pupils with learning difficulties

and disabilities and EAL are cared for well and additional support is well matched to their needs. The recent introduction of the 'Intensive Support Programme' is helping teachers set pupils more demanding individual targets. However, not all pupils are aware of their targets and how to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has taken effective action to bring about improvement. The school development plan is a comprehensive document that sets out the correct priorities for improvement and provides a useful framework for action and review. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and improvements are pursued through performance management. Subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work. However, there are weaknesses. The monitoring of the subject leaders is not yet sufficiently rigorous to improve the consistency of pupils' progress, particularly in Years 3 and 4, so inconsistencies remain. Governors are keen for the school to do well and satisfactorily hold the school to account for its work.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you what we think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. We enjoyed being with you, seeing you work and listening to your experiences and views.

There are lots of things that we liked about your school. Some of them are:

- You are able to learn in a very friendly and caring school.
- You behave well and you get on very well with each other.
- You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and try hard in your lessons.
- The school council represents your views well and you all help the school to run smoothly.
- You all want to do well at school. The oldest pupils are particularly keen and come to school voluntarily during the Easter holiday to improve their English and mathematics.
- You like all the clubs, visits and after school activities the school has organised for you.

We think that you are given a satisfactory education which prepares you for the next stage of your learning. To make it even better, however, we are asking your teachers to give you more opportunities to work independently and help you understand more clearly how you can improve your work. Teachers are also going to spend more time checking how much progress you are making and to help you improve even more.

Yours truly,

John Earish

Lead Inspector