



Lovington Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 123766
Local Authority Somerset
Inspection number 298965
Inspection date 21 November 2006
Reporting inspector Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lovington
School category	Voluntary controlled		Castle Cary
Age range of pupils	4-11		BA7 7PX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01963 240305
Number on roll (school)	58	Fax number	01963 240659
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Hugh Graham
		Headteacher	Judith Barrett
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lovington is a small village primary school where pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Numbers vary significantly between year groups and have been falling, although more pupils are now attending from outside the village. All pupils are from a White British background and speak English fluently. Attainment on entry is around the level usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average and high in some year groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lovington is a good school. Very good improvement since the last inspection in 2004 has resulted in the serious weaknesses seen at that time being successfully addressed. Teaching and learning have improved significantly and are now good. They are very good in the Year 5/6 class. As a result, pupils achieve well. Standards on entry to Reception are around those expected and are slightly above expectations on entry to Year 1. Standards in Year 2 have risen steadily and are now above average, although standards are higher in reading and mathematics than in writing, where spelling remains a weakness. As a result of very good progress made in Years 5 and 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the national average, and the school consistently reaches the very challenging targets set for its performance in national tests.

Exceptionally good improvements have been made to the curriculum, which is outstanding and underpins pupils' excellent behaviour and very good attitudes to school. As one parent wrote, 'curriculum initiatives show a wider appreciation of the environment required to develop our children outside of just delivering the syllabus'. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are good.

A major reason for the school's success is the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. Her hard work and determination to provide the very best for all pupils have led to the creation of an effective team of staff and governors who are determined that the school will eradicate weaknesses and continually move forward. Parents are very appreciative of their commitment and agree that the school is 'a great place to be'. Leadership and management are good and senior leaders and governors make an effective contribution to school development. The school has coped especially well with declining numbers in the younger classes and a significant increase in the oldest pupils' class. Very effective use of resources, together with excellent financial support from the parents' association, has ensured that these changes have not had an adverse effect on pupils' progress.

Systems for monitoring the school's work and checking on pupils' progress are very good and provide an accurate picture of how well the school is doing. This information is used well to adjust provision and to provide effective guidance and support to encourage pupils' progress. Overall care, support and guidance are good. However, the level of care is outstanding. This is greatly appreciated by parents and pupils, who feel the school is a very happy and safe place to be. In this friendly, warm and supportive environment, pupils flourish and their personal development is excellent. They become mature, helpful and confident young people with an excellent appreciation of how they can make a positive contribution to society.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by improving pupils' ability to spell words correctly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school has successfully addressed the underachievement in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Achievement throughout school, including that of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, is now good.

Reception children enter school with standards around those expected. Their good progress ensures the vast majority reach the expected standards by Year 1, with some exceeding them, particularly in their social development. However, not all reach the expected standards in writing. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, where higher-attaining pupils are now doing better than at the time of the last inspection. This is particularly evident in reading and writing, although many pupils still spell common words inaccurately. Standards in Year 2 have improved over the last two years and are currently above average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are still making up for slower progress in the past, but very good progress made in Years 5 and 6 ensures overall achievement is good. In Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. The highly challenging teaching means a significant number of pupils achieve the Level 5 in national tests, and the school reaches its very high targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Moral and social development are outstanding. Excellent relationships and behaviour ensure the school is a happy and harmonious place where pupils thrive. They are adamant that 'no bullying takes place'. Pupils feel very safe and happy in school. This ensures pupils' excellent attitudes and good attendance. They say, 'learning is fun, but you do have to work hard'. Well-planned assemblies and discussions help pupils to reflect carefully on the spiritual elements of life. Many opportunities for art, music and drama activities and links with other countries result in good cultural development.

Pupils' knowledge of how to achieve a healthy lifestyle is excellent. The very popular sporting activities and the Wake Up Club have resulted in the school achieving the Activemark award. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. They make constructive links with local businesses and help and support a school in Zambia. Activities initiated by the school council are very good; for example, the council helped set up a tuck shop to provide healthy food and drinks. This, together with other activities which encourage pupils' enterprise, helps ensure pupils are well prepared for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Underpinned by the exceptionally good curriculum, lessons provide interesting and challenging activities which result in good progress. As one parent put it, pupils do well because 'teachers really care and are fun and friendly'. Pupils know that teachers want them to do their best and there is a strong emphasis on involving pupils actively in learning. This enables them to use their numeracy and science skills well in solving problems. However, lessons could do more to improve spelling. Teachers are skilled questioners who carefully guide pupils to new understanding and move on quickly to new work. Good marking helps pupils recognise what they need to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by classroom assistants. Through their support for homework, parents make a positive contribution to their children's progress. In Years 5 and 6, teachers' exceptionally high expectations of what pupils can achieve and excellent advice on how they can do better ensure pupils make very good progress in these year groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum very successfully develops links between subjects and is making learning purposeful and enjoyable. It is clearly focused on raising standards throughout the school, particularly in pupils' writing. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and significantly improved since the last inspection. The headteacher has actively sought outside expertise for this small school to provide the excellent range of activities that pupils and parents value. A wide range of visits and visitors to the school enriches the curriculum, and assemblies run by local businesses contribute to pupils' economic well-being. Both French and Spanish are taught and the school has productive links with schools in Africa and Spain. Successful involvement in a wide range of sporting competitions further raises pupils' enjoyment. The very good personal, social and health education programme makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Support and guidance are good. The school has very good systems for keeping a check on pupils' progress and these are used well to set pupils targets for improvement. Day-to-day advice on how to improve is generally good, although pupils say they are not always reminded about their personal targets. Effective systems to support pupils' personal development help maintain high standards in this area. The outstanding level of care is a key factor in pupils' enjoyment of school and their improved progress. Excellent systems are in place to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure at all times. Child protection procedures, including staff training, are effective and risks assessments

are thorough. Pupils are confident that they can seek help and advice from teachers and other adults when they need it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The foundation of the school's very good improvement since the last inspection is the high quality leadership. The headteacher has skilfully guided the school through a period of enormous change in staffing and in approaches to teaching and learning. Well supported by senior staff, the headteacher has turned the school round from one with serious weaknesses to one which provides a good quality of education and is improving still further. This is due to the way they have guided and motivated teachers, pupils, parents and governors to work together to help bring this about. As one parent said, 'the headteacher is a star and the school is a great example of how a small community school can work so well'.

There is thorough monitoring of every aspect of the school's work by both staff and governors, to which pupils and parents contribute well. This means that the school has a clear picture of the impact of its strategies for improvement and it knows exactly what it needs to do next. The rapid improvement made since the last inspection shows that it is well placed to improve further.

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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?	1
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	2
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?	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	2
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	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?	1
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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunch time to talk to us. You and your parents think your school is good and we agree with you. These are the things that we think are really good about your school.

- You have an excellent headteacher and together with the staff and governors she is working very hard to give you a good education.
- You feel very happy and safe in school because staff take especially good care of you and they keep a close check on how good your progress is so they can help you improve.
- The school very successfully helps you develop as young people. You like your teachers and enjoy school very much. You get on very well together and behave especially well and you do lots of work to help improve your school and schools in other countries.
- The exciting and varied activities teachers plan for you, such as French and Spanish lessons and the Wake Up Club, together with lots of visits and visitors, help you enjoy school and do well.
- Lessons are exciting and interesting and help you all to learn well and reach good standards.
- Your parents are giving the school a lot of help to provide you with a good quality education. In particular they give you good support for your homework.

You are doing much better in writing, but you still do not do quite as well as you could and this is what we have asked your teachers to do to help you make even better progress.

- Make sure you spell words correctly in all your written work. You can help by remembering all the new words you have learnt in your spelling homework and thinking very carefully before you write.