

Lansdowne Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118485
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312960
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dick Calvert
Headteacher	Debbie Wheeler
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2004
School address	Gladstone Drive Sittingbourne ME10 3BH
Telephone number	01795 423752
Fax number	01795 423752

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2008
Inspection number	312960

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A higher-than-average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is below the level expected for children of this age. In 2007 the school gained the Healthy School, Activemark and Eco School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which provides an effective education for all its pupils. Pupils have good relationships with all staff, enjoy school and develop well as individuals. Pastoral care is strong because everyone in the school works hard to make sure each child feels valued, secure, confident and ready to learn. The vast majority of parents agree, and make comments such as, 'My child's welfare is always top priority' and 'They enjoy school and get on well here'. This is a key feature in the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour, and is reflected in their strong personal development.

Standards and achievement have both risen steadily across the school over recent years. Improvement has been largely due to the extremely focused and clear vision of the headteacher. Supported well by other senior leaders, she has been able to drive forward the good developments seen since the last inspection, such as in provision for information and communication technology (ICT). This steady improvement demonstrates clearly that the school has a good capacity to make further progress. By using data effectively, leaders are able to check carefully how the school is doing and just what is needed to improve. Because of this approach, leaders are well aware that standards in writing are not as strong as in other subjects and they are already taking actions to improve this. The numerous initiatives introduced to raise the quality of writing are increasingly bearing fruit and improving pupils' writing in English lessons. However, this good progress is not yet consistently built on because pupils do not use these skills regularly enough when they are writing in other subjects.

Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress because teaching is effective and the curriculum is well planned to support pupils' learning. Consequently, by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing. They use this information well to set clear and challenging targets for pupils and give additional support when needed, particularly in writing through the 'Big Write' sessions. However, whilst lessons are generally well planned, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to use assessment information even more effectively to ensure all pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged to achieve their best.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Very good procedures in the Foundation Stage enable children to settle quickly into the routines of school life and ensure that they behave well and enjoy their learning. Children benefit from good teaching and an exciting array of activities in the classrooms and outdoor area. A good balance is struck between teacher-led and pupil-initiated activities. When children start school, their skill and knowledge levels in all aspects of learning are below those expected. They make good progress so that most reach their targets by the end of Reception. Although few reach all the nationally expected goals, standards are a lot closer to age-related expectations at the end of the year than they were on entry. Regular checks by the Foundation Stage leader have identified that some aspects of children's learning, such as their creative and social and emotional development, are less strong than others. Actions to improve this are planned. Links with parents are good. They fully support and approve of the education offered and greatly appreciate their children's easily understood targets, which are shared with them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure that assessment information is always used to the full to plan work that provides enough challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Across the school, pupils achieve well. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception year they have developed well, although levels of understanding and skills are still below those expected for children of this age in all aspects of learning. Children's good start is built on well in Years 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 2; standards are in line with the national average. Pupils' good progress continues throughout Years 3 to 6. In 2007, results were average in English, mathematics and science. Though few pupils reached the higher levels, this still represented good progress for these pupils from their starting points. Whilst standards in writing across the school were weaker than in other subjects, the school's tracking data show pupils making good progress in the subject. The school sets challenging and demanding targets for pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Good teaching combined with effective tracking of pupils' progress are key factors in why these targets are met and in some instances exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are reflected in their enjoyment of school, positive attitudes, regular attendance and good behaviour. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and work well together. Consequently, they get along well and help one another, as is demonstrated by their readiness to welcome new pupils to the school. They have a good understanding of the importance of staying safe and having a healthy lifestyle, particularly relating to food and exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, their understanding of the variety of customs and cultures of diverse modern society is less well developed. Pupils' contribution to the school community, including that made through the school council, is good. They enjoy taking responsibility and are proud to have an impact on school life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, teachers manage their classes well and relationships between staff and pupils are good. Teachers expect their pupils to work well and explain the work clearly, which helps pupils to remain involved and working purposefully. Effective use of 'talk partners' encourages pupils to explain their ideas to each other and develop their communication skills well. Teaching assistants are skilled and effectively support pupils individually and in small groups, ensuring that those with learning difficulties, for example, make the same progress as others. Overall, teachers plan work effectively to meet all pupils' needs in lessons. This is because they generally use assessment and pupils' targets well to plan activities that challenge and help

pupils to make good progress. Even so, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to stretch pupils further, particularly the most able, in the tasks they provide. The quality of marking is good. Most teachers give constructive feedback that enables pupils to improve their work further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The information gained from checking and evaluating pupils' progress is used successfully to make improvements in order to provide a good curriculum. For instance, the school has reviewed the provision for writing and introduced programmes such as 'Sounds Write' to improve spelling. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are developed well. However, opportunities for pupils to practise and use the skills they have learnt in writing in English in other subjects are not yet sufficient to help raise standards in writing. Plans have been made to address this through developing greater links between subjects and an increasingly flexible and exciting curriculum. Across the school, the curriculum is adapted very well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is beginning to be adapted to support the most able pupils with the same effectiveness. A well-planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education helps to promote pupils' good personal development. The wide range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended add to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Both pastoral and academic care, guidance and support for pupils are good. This is a school in which pupils' individual needs are recognised and where their pastoral care is given a high priority. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are all secure. Pupils feel very safe at school and explain that bullying is not a problem. Very strong links with outside support agencies and parents add to the effectiveness of the school's very good systems to support pupils' social, emotional and academic needs. Academic guidance is firmly focused on how pupils can make good progress. All pupils have a good awareness of their individual targets for improvement and are increasingly involved in self-assessing their own work, a significant improvement from the last inspection. The school is beginning to extend the good quality of marking to other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads and manages the school extremely well. She has played a pivotal role in fostering the strong sense of team spirit now shared by other senior leaders and staff. As a result, everyone is focused on making the school even better. The school's self-evaluation, which is both accurate and, more importantly, is geared to improving the school's performance, is a key factor in the school's good rate of improvement. The school's priorities for raising standards in writing, robust tracking of pupils' performance and for continuing to raise the quality of teaching and learning are well promoted by the effective senior management team. Governance is good because the governing body is supportive. Governors are playing an increasingly effective role in questioning and evaluating the work and performance of the school, although they recognise that there is still further to go.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

7 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Lansdowne Primary School, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3BH

Thank you for talking with us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We are pleased to hear that you love school and that the grown-ups are very kind and look after you really well. We think that they are particularly good at helping you to get on well with each other. They also encourage you to take part in the decisions that help in improving your school.

There are plenty of things for you to take part in such as the school council and all your clubs. Teaching is good and your teachers plan interesting activities for you, which means you enjoy school. They help you to make good progress. You are polite to adults and to each other and behave well around school. You make everyone in your school feel very welcome and enjoy sharing with visitors just what you like about your lessons and your school.

Lansdowne Primary School is a good school. It is well led and the adults know what needs to be done to make it even better. In order to make your learning even better we have asked the adults at your school to:

- Give you lots of chances to practise and improve your writing in the work you do in different subjects.
- Ensure that the work in lessons always challenges you fully, particularly those of you who learn quickly.

You can help by always using the skills you have learnt in literacy when you are writing in other subjects. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Marshall Lead inspector



7 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Lansdowne Primary School, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3BH

Thank you for talking with us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We are pleased to hear that you love school and that the grown-ups are very kind and look after you really well. We think that they are particularly good at helping you to get on well with each other. They also encourage you to take part in the decisions that help in improving your school.

There are plenty of things for you to take part in such as the school council and all your clubs. Teaching is good and your teachers plan interesting activities for you, which means you enjoy school. They help you to make good progress. You are polite to adults and to each other and behave well around school. You make everyone in your school feel very welcome and enjoy sharing with visitors just what you like about your lessons and your school.

Lansdowne Primary School is a good school. It is well led and the adults know what needs to be done to make it even better. In order to make your learning even better we have asked the adults at your school to:

- Give you lots of chances to practise and improve your writing in the work you do in different subjects.
- Ensure that the work in lessons always challenges you fully, particularly those of you who learn quickly.

You can help by always using the skills you have learnt in literacy when you are writing in other subjects. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Marshall
Lead inspector