

Lyngford Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123715
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314686
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

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	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daphne Gilham
Headteacher	Annette Cox
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2003
School address	Bircham Road Taunton TA2 8EX
Telephone number	01823 284912
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lyngford Park Primary School is a large primary school near the centre of Taunton. Most pupils are from a White British background, with small numbers from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly in line with the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Lyngford Park is a satisfactory school. It has some considerable strengths, not least the caring ethos, which encourages pupils' good personal development and makes them feel valued and safe. Pupils are friendly and cheerful. Behaviour is good and pupils are considerate of each other. Good relationships contribute to a strong sense of belonging. Pupils' contribution to their own and the wider community is outstanding. They relish the opportunity to contribute and take responsibility. Parents are enthusiastic supporters of the school. The school has worked successfully to involve them through such initiatives as 'Bring an adult to school' and parent partnership meetings. 'A school where parents can hold their head up high and say, "My child goes to Lyngford Park" ', is typical of parental comments.

Children get off to a good start and make good progress in the Reception class. However, this rate of progress is not sustained in Years 1 and 2, and pupils' achievement here is satisfactory. Standards in reading and writing remain relatively weak by the end of Year 2. Progress improves through Years 3 to 6 and pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Some do better than this. Overall standards are a little below average by the end of Year 6, although the quality of pupils' writing remains a relative weakness and a barrier to good progress in a number of subjects. While teaching is satisfactory, it is improving and some is good. Lessons are calm and purposeful and pupils are keen to do well. Although teachers plan work carefully, expectations are not always high enough and there is not enough challenge, particularly for pupils that are more able. Increasingly good use is being made of assessment information to plan work and set pupils challenging targets, but this remains patchy.

The satisfactory curriculum provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop basic skills, including in information and communication technology. There are good opportunities for enrichment through visits and visitors. Pupils' good personal development is encouraged and supported by a well-planned programme for personal, social and health education. This is a school in which care is woven into the fabric of the school and the welfare of all pupils is given a high priority. This key principle results, as one parent expressed, in a 'friendly and happy school'.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has inspired a strong drive for improvement and staff have responded enthusiastically. Self-evaluation is accurate but there is more to be done in ensuring all teachers use performance data confidently to set challenging targets. Recent initiatives to secure greater consistency in the quality of provision are already beginning to have an impact. Governors are increasingly effective in their role of supporting and challenging the school because they have a better understanding of the school. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills well below typical levels, particularly in their language development. However, systems for assessing pupils on entry to school do not give a clear evaluation of what children know and can do when they begin school. They settle quickly into school routines, enthusiastically joining in all activities. The involvement of parents at the beginning of the day encourages a good partnership and supports the children's enjoyment and developing confidence. Children make good progress and acquire skills that are in line with

expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Good progress is the result of good teaching which provides the children with an exceptional range of activities, both indoors and outdoors, to stimulate their interest and help them develop their skills as inquisitive and independent learners. Both teachers and teaching assistants work carefully in tracking children's progress, providing intervention and support when needed. Day-to-day assessment procedures are rigorous and help effective planning for all pupils. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievements throughout the school and particularly in reading in Years 1 and 2 and writing through the school.
- Raise expectations of what pupils might achieve and plan work that challenges each pupil at their own individual level to do their best.
- Build the capacity of all staff to use assessment data confidently to set challenging targets for pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the time pupils leave school in Year 6 their attainment in English, mathematics and science is below average. Given that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average, this represents satisfactory achievement. While children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, this is not consolidated during Years 1 and 2, when progress dips a little. There was significant underachievement in performance in Year 2 national tests in 2007. This has largely been eliminated and overall progress is now satisfactory. Performance in mathematics in particular has improved. However, pupils' reading and writing skills remain a barrier to more rapid progress in all subjects. Pupils' progress accelerates through Years 3 to 6. While all pupils achieve satisfactorily, some individual pupils do better than this. Standards in all subjects are a little below average, although attainment in mathematics and science is higher than in English, and writing remains a weakness. The school is taking determined action to tackle this and there are emerging signs of a greater confidence in pupils' writing. However, basic skills of presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are a challenge for many pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because of well-targeted and effective support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and get involved in everything it has to offer. They develop into sensible and thoughtful young people and are proud to be part of the school community. They are confident that adults are to be trusted, relationships are good and they feel safe and valued. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. In addition to helping out with the running of the school through acting as playground leaders or dinner monitors, pupils are involved in appointing staff and contributing to the school's curriculum review. They are proud to be members of the school council and have brought about a number of improvements through their own initiative, for example in the playground and the design of the garden. They are also

involved in many activities with the wider community. All these responsibilities are taken very seriously. Pupils' good attitudes and thoughtful and polite behaviour contribute much to the school's happy atmosphere. Pupils' moral and social development is good. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, co-operate well with each other when working in groups, and are sensitive to the needs and circumstances of others. Pupils have a good awareness of the benefits of healthy living. Although standards in basic skills remain below average, pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While teaching is satisfactory overall, much good teaching exists, particularly in Years 3 to 6. However, this is not consistent through the school, and the school has wisely set up systems for sharing good practice. The school's motto, 'We learn by doing', is increasingly used as the touchstone for lesson planning. Pupils themselves comment that they like lessons that are practical and where they are active participants. A good climate for learning is established in lessons, and activities are well designed to interest and enthuse the pupils. Well targeted intervention and support from teaching assistants ensure pupils with learning difficulties feel included and supported. However, planning is not always geared to the wide range of ability found in all classes and more able pupils in particular find some of the work too easy. Expectations are not consistently high. Many pupils lack confidence in their ability to succeed and teachers use praise well to build their self-esteem. Encouragement to 'join the go-for-it gang' helps pupils considerably. However, teachers sometimes fail to challenge pupils to improve their work further through either questioning or marking. Assessment information is beginning to be used to inform pupils of how well they are doing and to set targets for further improvement, but the quality of this is uneven.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is sensibly weighted towards developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. However planning for progression and ensuring challenge for pupils of all abilities is not so well considered. The school has begun to move towards a thematic approach, which is doing much to encourage a more relevant and meaningful curriculum. The recently formed curriculum development committee, involving teachers, governors and pupils, has brought fresh ideas and creativity to this approach. The Carnival theme, which culminated in a highly successful procession, was particularly effective. Pupils like this approach, reflected in the imaginative artwork on Chinese and Brazilian themes. Visits and visitors are used well to enrich pupils' experience, and pupils appreciate the wide range of after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The strong commitment to the care and well-being of individual children is evident in all aspects of the school's work. This results in the warm and friendly community, which is Lyngford Park. All safeguarding and child protection procedures are fully in place and pupils feel confident in the support of adults. The care for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties is particularly effective. Performance data are used to track the progress of all pupils and to

provide satisfactory academic guidance and support. Half-termly pupil progress meetings have been introduced and these are beginning to have some impact, but more time is needed before they are fully effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Changes in leadership at all levels have inspired a fresh energy and commitment to school improvement. The headteacher has played a significant part in developing this forward momentum. She leads with a strong determination that her pupils deserve the very best. She is well supported by her senior team who share her ambition and drive. The headteacher has a firm grasp of what needs to be done and has initiated a number of strategies, which are already making a difference to pupils' achievement. Monitoring by the headteacher, senior staff and governors is regular and supportive, encouraging satisfactory self-evaluation. At other levels, staff have a growing confidence in their ability to contribute fully, but this remains uneven. The introduction of regular pupil progress meetings has been critical in developing class teachers' awareness of how well individual pupils are progressing. However some teachers lack the capacity to analyse data confidently in order to set challenging personal targets for pupils. While at a whole-school level, performance data are used effectively to set targets, at individual pupil level, the use of personal targets to inform pupils of their next learning step is not consistent. Governors are making an increasingly effective contribution. Their links with individual classes ensure they are better informed and better able to support and challenge the school.

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Annex A

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
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	3

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 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	1
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?	3
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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lyngford Park Primary School, Taunton, TA2 8EX

- Thank you very much for being so welcoming when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and were particularly impressed by the cheerful and friendly way in which you greeted us. It is clear that you enjoy being at the school and take pride in attending it. We agree with what you told us: Lyngford Park is a friendly school and overall is providing you with a satisfactory education. However there are many good points.
- You are friendly, polite and growing up into sensible young people.
- You make an excellent contribution to the school's community.
- You make good progress in the Reception class.
- Most of you make satisfactory progress, but there is room for you to do better, particularly in your reading and writing.
- You try hard to please in lessons and behaviour through the school is good.
- While teaching is satisfactory, your teachers are working hard to make it even more interesting for you.
- The school takes good care of you, ensuring you feel safe and well looked after.
- The headteacher and teachers are working hard to make your school even better.

We have asked the teachers to do the following in order to make things even better.

- Make sure that you do even better, particularly in reading and writing.
- Make sure that you aim to be the very best and that work in lessons is just right to help each one of you make progress at the right pace.
- Ensure that teachers use information about how well you are doing to set you personal targets that make you think and do as well as you can.

You can certainly help the teachers with these things. Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and good luck with your work in the future.

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield Lead inspector