

Lings Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121933
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340051
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Maxine Clewlow

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 of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Clive Curry
Headteacher	Ms Jacqueline Treacy (Interim headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, they observed eight teachers teaching nine lessons. Meetings were held with governors, staff, groups of pupils, representatives of the local authority and, informally, with parents. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's documentation relating to safeguarding, its improvement plans, reports on the school's work and records of pupils' progress. They analysed 35 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether the school's strategies to improve teaching, put in place since the last inspection, are raising standards sufficiently and improving the progress of pupils
- the school's capacity, during a period of change in leadership, to sustain and drive further improvements.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the number of pupils who leave and join the school during each year. The proportion of pupils who English as an additional language is above average. The school provides its own breakfast club care facility. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, Active Mark and the Inclusion Mark.

Since September 2009 the school has been led by an interim headteacher covering the maternity leave of the substantive headteacher.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Overall, pupils' attainment is low and too many pupils do not make enough progress in lessons and over time. Leaders and managers have failed to intervene with effective strategies to improve teaching and a number of aspects of the school's work require significant improvement. The interim headteacher has provided the school with the initial effective steps towards tackling underperformance and identifying inefficient systems. Her accurate and incisive monitoring and evaluation have informed the senior team how to improve the school. Recent analysis of the good tracking data has started to provide useful information about how much progress pupils are making. Some initiatives to raise the quality of teaching, such as coaching and improvements to planning, have been put in place and a number of strengths were observed in lessons as a consequence. However, these changes are too recent to have had a positive impact on progress. In too many lessons expectations are not clear and pupils are not always provided with activities that move learning forward fast enough. Pupils spend too much time listening to teacher-led elements of lessons and some pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Consequently, teaching is inadequate.

Leadership is fragile. The interim headteacher's position is uncertain and senior leadership roles are in their early stages of effective development. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has not been effective in monitoring and evaluating the quality and impact of practice or driving improvement forward. However, although too recent for the impact to be evident, much work has been done lately to improve planning, policies and the children's learning. For a number of years the governing body has not been at full strength and has struggled to attract committed members. The governing body has not fully discharged its statutory duties with regard to the implementation of appropriate policies and systems for keeping pupils safe. While all child protection procedures and policies are exemplary, and pupils say clearly that they feel safe and demonstrate that they understand how to keep themselves safe, there are a number of safety issues that have not been addressed.

Some aspects of the school's work are satisfactory or better. The school is bright and welcoming and there is instant warmth reflected by courteous and cheerful pupils and staff. Pupils behave well and they are polite and friendly towards each other. However, in lessons pupils do not always take responsibility for their own learning and some rely

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on teachers and adults to prompt them to complete their work. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and much good work has taken place to provide a variety of opportunities for them to participate in regular exercise. The pupils clearly enjoy their morning 'Activate' sessions and these prepare them well for their day. The school has made efforts to promote good attendance, with rewards, careful monitoring of attendance figures and meetings with families. Despite these measures, a small number of families do not ensure that their children attend regularly. Attendance has declined since the last inspection and is now below average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Close the gap between attainment in English, mathematics and science at Lings school and the national averages by:
 - making sure that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make consistently good or better progress in all lessons to eradicate underachievement
 - increasing the amount of good teaching and ensuring a clear focus on raising expectations and matching the level of work to the abilities of all pupils
 - improving the pace of learning and active participation by pupils in lessons.
- Develop leadership expertise across the school and ensure all contribute to school improvement by:
 - improving the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - establishing effective monitoring and evaluation practices by all those with leadership and management responsibilities, including the governing body
 - strengthening the governing body so that it is at full complement and has the capacity to fulfil its responsibilities.
- Ensure all safeguarding requirements are fulfilled by:
 - completing relevant risk assessments for internal school activities
 - improving relationships between the facilities management company and the leaders of the school so that systems and practice can be agreed
 - ensuring formal records are kept for incidents of racist behaviour.
- Improve attendance to at least average with a focus on supporting the few families who persistently do not send their children to school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils start the school with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach levels that are below age-related expectations at the beginning of Year 1. Although national test results improved to broadly average in 2009, the school's careful tracking of different groups shows that, overall, pupils are not making sufficient progress to raise levels of attainment and the school is falling short of its targets. Progress

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through the school is inconsistent from one year to the next so a significant number of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not making sufficient progress in some year groups. However, currently, pupils in Year 6 are progressing well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. With attendance now below average, and basic skills in need of improvement, pupils are not well prepared to contribute to their future economic well-being.

Pupils enjoy taking responsibility in school and they are proud to explain their roles as play leaders and monitors. They talk positively about their school and enjoy the variety of activities to keep them fit and healthy. School staff provide consistent care which results in kind behaviour and a strong sense of respect for each others' cultures. Strong relationships between adults and pupils support these positive outcomes. Pupils embrace and welcome different cultures in their school although their understanding of religious practices is more limited. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they know who to go to if they have concerns.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The quality of teaching is improving with examples of good strategies now being adopted throughout the school. Pupils are given opportunities to use speaking and listening skills by working with 'talk partners', and open-ended activities often provide interest and enjoyment. However, too little attention is given to the quality of learning with limited scrutiny of the quality of the tasks. Assessment information is being gathered on a regular basis but teachers have not started to use it to inform their planning and precisely match activities to need to move learning forward. Too much time is wasted, either in teacher-led talk or because clear expectations for pupils are not set at the beginning of lessons. Objectives are sometimes too vague and do not clearly identify the learning required to move pupils forward.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enriched by some opportunities to develop skills in sports and the arts. A high priority is given to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through positive initiatives, such as the 'Big Write'. The influence of this is starting to be seen in pupils' writing but more time is needed to measure the impact. Although there are a variety of enrichment opportunities throughout the school, these are not planned strategically to provide coherence to the curriculum.

The school is not fulfilling some of its strategic safety responsibilities. However, pupils receive good pastoral support in the classrooms from teachers and support staff. Relationships are excellent with a great deal of time devoted to supporting pupils' needs throughout the day. For these reasons, care guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall. The friendly and well-organised breakfast club gives pupils a relaxed and positive start to their day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The interim headteacher has worked very hard to improve provision. Her enthusiasm and energy have enabled others to recognise that pupils' attainment and progress require improvement. Strengths and weaknesses have been accurately assessed and measures initiated to move the school forward. Improvements to teaching are developing and strategies put in place, in partnership with the local authority, are starting to take effect. There is, however, insufficient capacity for the school to move forward without further assistance. Furthermore, the school is not promoting equal opportunities effectively because large groups of pupils are not making sufficient progress. The governing body relies on the efforts of two or three governors and,

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therefore, it is unable to fulfil its statutory responsibilities in terms of supporting the school's leaders and monitoring policies and systems. Not all safeguarding responsibilities have been fulfilled. The racist incident log, fire drill procedures and completion of risk assessments have not been monitored for accuracy or completion. The staff have worked diligently to foster good relationships with their community and pupils have a strong respect for different cultures. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily with leaders having a clear understanding of the school's context. Leaders recognise that the impact of some of the activities should now be evaluated to inform the planning of future provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class is based in a large, open-plan space with an adequate outdoor learning area. Adults work well together to provide a varied range of learning experiences which are fun and engage the children. Although bright and organised into the separate areas for learning, the classroom space allows children to spread out too much. As a result, children do not always have sufficient opportunity to engage with each other or to develop their speaking and listening skills. Children are happy, behave well and they develop good attitudes to learning. There is a good balance of opportunities indoors and out with independent learning interspersed by focused, teacher-led groups. The teacher's planning is very new but is moving positively towards identifying appropriate experiences for the children based on the assessment information that has been collected. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has

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started to make positive changes to policies and has begun to work with the team to improve teaching. Risk assessments have not been completed for the safe usage of the equipment and not all adults are clear about safety procedures.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

Views of parents and carers

About one sixth of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and a very small number spoke with an inspector during the inspection. A large majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at school. A few parents are concerned about how much progress their children are making and whether the school is meeting their children's needs. One parent commented, 'My child could be pushed further.' This is in line with the inspection team's judgement. Inspectors agree that not all pupils are making sufficient progress and that levels of attainment are too low.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lings Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	43	19	54	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	26	24	69	1	3	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	31	19	54	5	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	20	24	69	4	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	34	22	63	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	20	22	63	6	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	23	26	74	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	23	19	54	5	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	29	16	46	9	26	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	26	20	57	2	6	4	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	11	23	66	2	6	6	17
The school is led and managed effectively	8	23	19	54	0	0	6	17
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	31	22	63	2	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lings Primary School, Northampton, NN3 8NN

Thank you all for welcoming us so warmly to your school. We are particularly grateful to those who came to talk to us and we enjoyed seeing you perform in your assembly. We would like to share with you what we found.

We think that there are some things that your school does well. Your school is welcoming and you behave kindly towards each other. You enjoy your school activities, feel safe in school and know how to lead a healthy lifestyle. We were impressed with your eagerness to get ready for lessons when you join in with your 'Activate' session each morning.

Your teachers are working hard to improve your learning and there are things we think will help them. We have decided that they need extra help to support them in this so we have placed the school in 'special measures'. Other inspectors will visit your school to see how well it is improving. Here are some of the things that need to be done to make your school better.

We have asked teachers to help you make more progress so that you can achieve higher standards in English, mathematics and science.

Teachers have been asked to plan tasks which will challenge you and help you learn more quickly.

The leaders of your school need more help to work together with governors to make your school a successful and safe place to learn.

A few pupils do not come to school every day and this slows down their learning. We have asked the school to work with these pupils and their families to improve their levels of attendance.

You can all help by working hard and we wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Maxine Clewlow

Lead inspector

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