

Little Bowden School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119936
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327154
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Alwyne Jolly

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	320
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Boa
Headteacher	Nick McDonald
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Scotland Road Little Bowden Market Harborough LE16 8AY
Telephone number	01858 462528
Fax number	01858 464196

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size school situated close to Market Harborough. Pupils are taught in two Reception classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Little Bowden Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is a happy place with some good features. Good leadership and management of the EYFS ensure that children make particularly good progress, with the result that standards are above average on entry to Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 to 6 so that when they leave school, standards are above average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and provisional Year 6 national test results indicate they are improving, particularly in English. The good curriculum is well balanced and enhanced by a particularly wide range of activities which ensure that pupils enjoy their time at school. This was summed up by one parent who said, 'Little Bowden is a very happy school, rich in extra-curricular activities.'

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good elements. Well-managed lessons create a good learning environment that encourages pupils to behave well and respond positively to the good quality care, support and guidance they receive. However, in some classes, less effective planning means that occasionally, more able pupils do not progress at the rate they should in mathematics and science. The good practices in several classrooms are not extended in a consistent way across the school. Relationships are consistently good, which helps to foster pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils appreciate the importance of living healthily and the large number of well-attended sports clubs available is important in achieving this.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has ensured this is a harmonious and orderly school with a clear sense of direction. The governors have improved their monitoring role so they can both support and challenge the school as necessary. Systems to monitor performance and track pupils' progress are developing but are at an early stage and have not yet led to whole-school initiatives which have raised standards. The school has good links with local agencies which help to promote both learning and the cohesion of the community. Although a few issues from the last inspection have not been fully resolved, the school shows satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

By the end of the Reception Year, most children have made good progress, especially in personal, social and emotional development, to attain above average standards. Good induction arrangements mean they settle quickly into school life. Effective questioning skills and high expectations encourage children to engage fully in their learning and to develop their speaking and listening skills very well from the start. They quickly gain confidence, develop very good relationships with staff and with each other and behave well. Children are cared for well and thoroughly enjoy the stimulating range of activities provided by the good curriculum. Teaching is usually good and phonic skills are particularly well taught. The leadership of the EYFS is good. The school is developing the use of assessment to help children's transition into Year 1. There is a good outside area adjacent to the classroom, but it is not used as well as it should be to help develop children's outdoor learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenging work for more able pupils.

- Ensure the monitoring of teaching and learning leads to a clear identification of the priorities for the school and the initiatives needed for improvement.
- Extend the best practice within the school to ensure more teaching is good or better.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter school with the skills and abilities expected for this age and make good progress throughout the EYFS. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are above average. By the time they leave school, standards remain above average, reflecting satisfactory progress from Years 1 to 6. The Year 2 national test results dipped to only average standards in 2008, and boys performed significantly less well than girls. However, it is clear the prior attainment of that cohort was lower and current standards are more in line with the above average attainment recorded in previous tests. Boys are now making better progress in Years 1 and 2 and there is no evidence of their underperformance in Years 3 to 6. The unvalidated Year 6 national tests for 2008 indicate similar attainment to 2007 when pupils' attainment was above average, reflecting satisfactory progress related to their prior attainment. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. More able pupils, however, do not always attain the standards of which they are capable in mathematics and science. The percentage exceeding the nationally expected level has improved in English in Year 6. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. In 2008, the school did not attain the challenging targets it set for mathematics, although it exceeded the less challenging realistic targets set for English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, and talk enthusiastically about their many friends and how happy they are together. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils' positive attitudes to school, confirmed by their good attendance, contribute strongly to their good personal development. They behave in a safe and orderly manner around the school and in classes. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to be healthy and active, appreciating the many clubs on offer to them, such as netball and maypole dancing. The school council meets regularly, and members speak proudly of the suggestions they have made which have improved the school, such as the provision of more playground equipment. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. There are good examples of the promotion of pupils' cultural development as exemplified by Year 6 pupils learning about early Jewish culture, but overall this is less strong than the other areas. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their community. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily and the school has clear plans to extend pupils' awareness and involvement in the wider community. Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills and their sound understanding of their own and the wider community give them a satisfactory preparation for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage their classes well. They have good relationships with their pupils, share lesson objectives clearly, and encourage good and respectful behaviour. This helps to create a positive climate for learning across the school. In good lessons, teachers have a strong determination to improve standards, and work is matched carefully to the abilities and needs of all pupils. In both classes in Year 1, for example, the extended guided writing of pupils about Jack and the Beanstalk enabled all pupils to make significant progress at their own levels. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities individually or in small groups. In a few lessons, however, pupils spend too long in cramped spaces on the carpet, which sometimes causes a lack of concentration. Planning is not always effective enough in ensuring that all pupils, especially the more able, progress at the rate and pace of which they are capable. Classroom displays have many aids to learning in literacy; this is not the case in mathematics. Marking by teachers is satisfactory, and the school is working hard to improve consistency across the school, particularly in the guidance to pupils on how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum covers well all the recommended areas for learning in the EYFS and the required subjects for Years 1 to 6. There is a particularly good range of enrichment activities, including many sports, curriculum weeks, challenge days, a school orchestra and the introduction of French as a foreign language. These all enhance pupils' learning and personal development. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are well developed by Year 6 and are often applied to real-life situations to ensure pupils receive satisfactory preparation for their economic well-being. There is a clear action plan for developing a programme for more able pupils in the school but, as yet, the curriculum is not effectively geared to their specific needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school promotes good levels of care, especially for the most vulnerable pupils, and staff understand the needs of those who need additional support. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed, and is significantly strengthened by the many good links the school has established with outside protection agencies. Occasionally, however, the work set in classes does not fully address the specific needs of those pupils. The school complies with all legislation to ensure pupils are safe, and the procedures to do this are good. Although arrangements for setting pupils' learning targets and for tracking their progress are steadily developing, they are not consistently used to be effective in all classes. Consequently, some pupils are unclear as to how they can improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is a well-respected leader who has promoted effectively the engagement of all pupils in the school community and has a good understanding of the school's needs. Good leadership is provided in key areas, notably the EYFS, the coordination of provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and literacy. Targeted teaching and well-considered initiatives in literacy have already raised the attainment of the more able in both reading and writing by Year 6 and there is a good action plan to address the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Monitoring is planned through a timetabled programme of release for the subject leaders which enables them to evaluate the teaching and provision of their subject effectively.

Nevertheless, this has not led consistently to initiatives which have raised standards. There are also satisfactory systems to track pupils' progress. The information gained, however, has not been used by teachers to match work to the defined needs of pupils consistently enough and hence raise standards. The governors are functioning more effectively than at the last inspection and now have a clear system of focused school visits. The findings provide feedback to subject leaders and fellow governors. They recognise, however, the need to implement a more extensive monitoring role. The school has effective development planning measured against clear criteria. Some of the issues from the last inspection, such as the teaching of the more able pupils, remain partly unresolved.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 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

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 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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Bowden Primary School, Market Harborough, LE16 8AY

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We found you very polite and friendly and enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you really like about your school.

We found Little Bowden to be a satisfactory school with several good features. The teaching and learning in the school is always at least satisfactory and you have a good curriculum with many interesting extra-curricular activities. You also understand the need for living a healthy life by exercising and eating properly.

We have suggested three areas that the school needs to improve.

- We have asked the teachers to give more difficult tasks to those of you who find work easier to ensure you achieve as well as you should. We will expect you to respond by working as hard as you can.
- We have asked the governors and staff to identify clear priorities and actions to ensure the school continues to improve.
- We have asked teachers to share the good practices demonstrated in some classrooms with all the other teachers.

My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alwyne Jolly

Lead inspector