

Lightwoods Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103947
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	308466
Inspection date	31 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Barbara Crane

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Baldwin
Headteacher	Elaine Bowen
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Castle Road East Oldbury B68 9BG
Telephone number	01214 292542
Fax number	01214 202322

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, and how well the leadership and management promotes improvement. Evidence was collected from observations, discussions and assessments. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

Lightwoods is an average-sized primary school. The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. Although nearly a fifth of pupils do not speak English as their first language, none is at an early stage of acquiring English. Children's attainment on entry is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lightwoods is a good school. The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with what it provides for their children. Comments such as 'The school fulfils a huge role in my child's education, social and emotional development' and 'The school instils a good sense of community' reflect their views. Pupils really enjoy their time at the school and this is reflected in their high level of attendance. Excellent relationships and good teaching ensure pupils' success. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is because they get a good grounding in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics, develop a love of learning and are brimming with confidence. Teachers want the best for pupils and work hard to make lessons interesting. Pupils say that teachers are 'really good and help us when we need it.' The pupils' views about what needs to improve are sought frequently and used wisely to improve their experiences. All of these factors combine to create a friendly and vibrant community in which pupils feel valued.

Pupils achieve well. The school has a strong track record in relation to pupils' performance in national tests. Results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are usually well above average. In 2007, standards remained well above average in English for Year 6 pupils, but dipped in mathematics and science. While almost all pupils reached average levels, a smaller proportion than in previous years did better than this. The school has taken steps to ensure that more-able pupils are now fully challenged, for example, in applying their knowledge of number in speedy mathematical calculations. These pupils are now securely on track to reach the higher level in all subjects. While pupils throughout the school do well, the rate of progress varies slightly in different year groups. Children in the Reception Year make good gains in their learning, and this is successfully built on in Years 1 and 2. The rate of progress slows slightly in Years 3 and 4. This is because the work for these pupils is not always well adapted to meet their different capabilities. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' progress accelerates again because expectations of what older pupils should achieve are particularly high.

Pupils' achievement in English is particularly good. They develop exceptionally good skills in reading and their written work is excellent. They have a very good sense of how to adapt the style of their writing to suit different purposes. While pupils also do well in mathematics and science, their knowledge of key areas in these subjects is stronger than their ability to use what they know. In all year groups, pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems and carry out scientific investigations is not quite as strong as other aspects of their work. Pupils are keen to get the right answer rather than explore different ways of finding it. Teaching does not always give pupils sufficient encouragement to consider their options and so pupils are better at extracting information than making informed decisions about what to do with it. Pupils' skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) are very well developed and used very effectively to research information and present their ideas.

A key factor in pupils' good achievement is the rigorous use of assessment information to monitor their progress. Pupils themselves have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. Pupils of all ages know their targets. Older pupils regard their target booklets as a means of encouragement and a useful tool for them to review their progress. They know the levels they are working at, and what they are aiming for next. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very robust. All pupils are known well and additional support is provided for any that need extra help. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress towards their targets because of effective teaching that sets out the small steps they need to make to reach them.

Pupils' excellent personal development and sense of well-being result from the outstanding level of support and guidance they receive from the staff. Their behaviour is excellent. They put into practice what they have learned about keeping safe and say that it is important to 'think before you do something' and to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils demonstrate excellent awareness of the need to make the right choices over eating and drinking and to take plenty of exercise. This sets them up well for a healthy future. Very effective partnerships with health services support the school's work in health education. Pupils are proud of the school's award for promoting healthy lifestyles. The school promotes pupils' confidence in using their skills and ideas to contribute to the school and wider community very effectively. The buddy system works extremely well, so that individual pupils are trained to provide valuable support in sorting out others' problems. Pupils take a full part in making decisions and, for example, have been involved in the process of appointing new staff. They are eager to talk about the impact that they have on their community and see the difference they make. The environment group has assisted in the design of the school grounds as well as supporting local environmental work. The school council is very well organised and has supported other local schools in setting up their own councils through ICT presentations of their work.

A wide range of extra activities enhances the curriculum. There are strong partnerships with other local schools in providing these and the take-up of activities is high. Almost all pupils participate in arts and sporting activities and this raises their attainment in these areas. In addition, over a hundred pupils from other schools take advantage of Lightwoods' extended provision for extra-curricular activities. Residential as well as day visits provide a rich variety of experiences for pupils in sport, the creative arts and languages. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their recent trip to London, when they visited museums and the theatre. Links with international schools give breadth to pupils' cultural understanding.

Leadership and management are principled and well focused on raising pupils' achievement. The headteacher provides a clear lead for a cheerful team of managers who enjoy their work and make a good contribution to school improvement. The school has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses because of good checks on teaching and learning and the careful monitoring of pupils' progress. The school recognises that pupils need more opportunities in mathematics and science to use their initiative and to set their own challenges in solving problems. A good start has been made and the success of initiatives is being checked. There is good capacity to further improve, demonstrated in the way in which the introduction of target-setting for all pupils is making a difference to their progress. The slightly slower rate of progress by pupils in Years 3 and 4 is being steadily overcome by well-planned professional development. Governors are well informed and are extending their ability to ask the school pertinent questions about its performance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception children get a good start. They thrive in a warm and supportive atmosphere. Good teaching leads to children's enthusiasm for learning. Children achieve well in all areas of learning. Most go from an average starting point to levels beyond those expected by the end of Reception. The provision for Reception children is well led and managed. Effective checks on what is working well and what needs to improve have rightly identified the need to provide more opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills across a wider range of activities. A good start has been made on providing more chances for children to do this, for example, during outdoor play activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work for Year 3 and 4 pupils more consistently matches their capabilities.
- Ensure that pupils use their ideas to fully explore possibilities in solving problems and investigating in mathematics and science.

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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?	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?	1
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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

31 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lightwoods Infant and Junior School, Oldbury, West Midlands B68 9BG

Thank you for giving me such a warm welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. I found that you go to a good school. It is a happy and friendly place in which you do well so that you reach well-above- average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave. This is because of the good teaching. You are right to feel proud of the ways in which you help your school to improve, as well as the wider community. These are the things that I found are best about your school.

- You like your lessons, enjoy being with friends and take part in lots of extra exciting activities and visits.
- You are growing up as confident young people who really enjoy helping each other. Your behaviour is excellent and you know how to keep healthy and safe. Well done everyone!
- You are very well looked after, find it easy to talk about any problems you have and get extra help with your work if you need it.
- The people in charge of the school know what they need to do to make the school even better and they work hard to get the best for you.

I have asked the people in charge to do two things to make the school even better for you. Firstly, to make sure that the work is always set at just the right level for those of you in Years 3 and 4 so that you can do your very best. Secondly, to make sure that you all have more chances to use your ideas to solve problems in mathematics and investigate in science. I saw how much you enjoy using your initiative and so I am sure that you will like doing this. Thank you again for helping me with my work. You have a bright future, make the most of your time at Lightwoods. I wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane Lead Inspector