

Livingstone Lower School

Clapham Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK41 7LG

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, staff and governors have improved the school's performance in all areas since the last inspection and leadership and management are good. Leaders and managers at all levels have high expectations of staff and pupils alike.
- Achievement is good and pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- From generally very low starting points, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time the pupils leave the school in Year 4.
- Teaching is typically good and occasionally outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy learning. The rich and interesting topics they learn about promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour add to the school's productive and friendly atmosphere. Pupils both feel, and know how to stay, healthy and safe and know that any adult who works in school will always help and support them.
- The governors provide a strong level of challenge, and support and take decisive action when this is needed. Alongside the senior leadership team, they work hard to ensure teaching and learning in the school are both good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels of attainment because teachers do not consistently challenge the more-able pupils.
- Attainment in mathematics is not as good as in English.
- The current system for recording and analysing pupils' progress is difficult for all teachers to access, making it hard for them to make proper use of this data when planning lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and were accompanied by the headteacher during three of these observations.
- The inspectors observed lunch breaks and behaviour around the whole school.
- Meetings were held with pupils, and inspectors talked to many other pupils during lessons and break times. The inspectors met with governors, a representative from the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- There were not enough responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, to publish the results. However, the inspectors took account of a recent school questionnaire with 77 responses.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, reviews of the school carried out by the local authority and the school improvement partner, school improvement plans, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Saunders

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- The school has undergone major building work over the past year to provide extra classrooms.
- The proportion of pupils who qualify for the pupil premium is above average. This additional government money is provided to help certain groups. In this school it currently applies only to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has a broad ethnic mix with some 25 languages spoken, and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics by making sure that all teachers consistently provide work which challenges the more-able pupils and allows them to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that systems for the collection and analysis of data relating to pupils' progress are made more easily accessible by all staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children have skills well below those expected for their age when they join the school. This is especially so in language, communication and numerical skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, entering Year 1 with skills below those expected for their age. The Early Years leader, teachers and excellent teaching assistants make sure there is a well-balanced teaching programme which provides a good balance between classroom and outdoor activities, and also between activities led by adults and those chosen by the children themselves. Substantial improvements take place in the children's personal development and social skills as a result.
- There was a dip in standards in 2012, due in part to pupils moving in and out of the school, and because this year group had a higher percentage of pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs. However, these pupils made good progress throughout their time in the school, as do other pupils currently on roll. Levels of attainment in all subjects are broadly average by the time the pupils leave. They have not risen above this because many pupils have not had time to overcome the difficulties they inevitably experience as a result of English not being their main language.
- Pupils get regular opportunities to read in school, and teachers and learning assistants make sure that their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) continues to be reinforced during lessons and support sessions.
- In the 2012 Key Stage 1 national assessments in English and mathematics, the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium was above that of other pupils in the school and nationally.
- The school's well-planned teaching and other support are also leading to improvement in the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and this has successfully narrowed the gap between their attainment and that of all other pupils. These pupils achieve standards that are above their peers nationally. This improvement is an example of the school's successful promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The school's systems for tracking each individual pupil's level of progress and achievement are detailed and accurate. The senior leadership team makes sure the data is carefully analysed to establish if there are any areas that are in need of strengthening and identify any individual pupils or groups who require additional support. However, the current systems are not easy for staff to access, and they consequently find it difficult to make use of this information when planning lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is good. In lessons where teaching is outstanding, pupils are fully occupied throughout the lesson, and teachers make constant checks on their learning to make sure the work both challenges and engages the pupils. This was demonstrated well during an inter-school Year 3 science session, where the school had partnered up with its neighbouring schools. Although a large number of pupils were present, all the adults made sure that all pupils were interested in what they were studying and felt able to ask searching questions about the things they saw and what they were learning.

- Teachers, and the other adults, who support them, ask probing questions that help them to find out what pupils are thinking so that they can check what they know and understand. They use the information well to plan the next lesson and, in the best lessons, act upon the information to explain in more detail and make changes to tasks and activities if they find pupils are struggling or finding the work too easy. A good example of this was seen in Year 1, where pupils explored a wide range of measuring activities. Good resources, well-placed adult support, incisive questioning and relevant, engaging activities resulted in all pupils thoroughly enjoying their learning and making good progress.
- Teachers are clear about what it is they want pupils to learn and good planning helps to make sure lessons are delivered effectively. This was seen in a number of lessons where teachers regularly reminded pupils about what they were learning and why.
- The information the teachers and other adults give pupils to help them improve their work is good and in some cases outstanding. For example in one mathematics lesson, a learning assistant was supporting the less-able pupils, and her questioning and discussion about how the pupils could improve their work resulted in all of them developing a much better understanding of what they had to do.
- Staff foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding well, with frequent reminders about how important it is to be able to work together, to value differences and to be patient with others.
- In some lessons and in mathematics in particular, teachers do not always provide work which challenges all the pupils and especially the more-able pupils, resulting in them not reaching the higher levels of attainment of which many are capable. Attainment in mathematics is consequently below that of English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour observed in lessons by inspectors was good and was sometimes outstanding. This has a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils behave well around the school, showing good manners and courtesy towards each other and adults. They are especially welcoming to those pupils who join the school during the school year or to other pupils from other schools. This was clearly seen during the Year 3 science session, where pupils from the school went out of their way to help and support the pupils from the other schools and made them very welcome.
- Pupils enjoy a range of responsibilities in their classrooms and around the school, such as supporting younger pupils at lunchtime and in the playground. As one little boy stated, 'The older children look after us, I feel safe with them there.' Such roles teach pupils to act responsibly and look after each other. Pupils all know how to stay safe and to show consideration for each other when, for instance, they are playing in the playground.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are safe and secure. They learn confidently to share equipment, to play happily together, become more independent and value each other's differences.
- Pupils work well together and their social skills are encouraged by group and paired work and in

helping each other in class.

- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. Older pupils take their responsibility for ensuring their own and other pupils' happiness seriously.
- Pupils, parents and staff all agree, that the pupils feel safe and secure in school. Pupils say teachers and support staff have helped them to understand how to take care on the roads or when using the internet.
- Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying such as name-calling and cyber-bullying. They are adamant that no bullying exists in school. As one pupil stated, 'There are no bullies in this school, just one or two naughty children.'
- Behaviour is judged as good rather than outstanding because of the occasional instances of silly behaviour inspectors observed in lessons. This occurred largely when pupils were not fully involved in learning because the tasks set did not fully challenge them.
- Attendance is average and improving because leaders and managers, working closely with the local authority, deal with absence effectively. Another reason is that pupils enjoy their lessons and want to be in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong partnership created between the headteacher, senior leadership team, staff and governors has allowed the school to improve rapidly. Leaders have established a cohesive and determined approach that ensures all children and pupils are entitled to and receive the best opportunities possible. They have raised the expectations and aspirations of both pupils and staff, and have set out a clear path for the school's continuing improvement. Staff are fully supportive of the aims of the school and all share the same vision.
- Parents are very positive about the school and the work the school does with them is exemplary, covering such areas as further education, parenting skills, language acquisition and a range of other opportunities.
- Leadership at all levels, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good. Subject leaders, particularly for reading, writing and mathematics, have been supported very effectively by the school and local authority to help them develop their leadership skills, and they now take an active part in developing and checking the quality of work in their subjects. They have been fully involved in leading whole-school training and in evaluating their subjects to identify strengths to share and weaker aspects that need further development.
- Robust checking of the quality of the school's work, linked to a programme of further training, is well established. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved quickly and an increasing proportion is outstanding. The monitoring of teaching and of the performance of teachers is properly overseen by the governing body.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school, not just in developing the quality of teaching but also in putting into place arrangements to support and develop the school's leadership. This has helped the school to develop its middle leaders and so maintain improvements in the school.

- Teaching programmes are kept under continuous review and are adapted, as necessary; to include interesting and varied topics that make sure all pupils can access learning equally. Disabled pupils and those who have special education needs are supported well through specially adapted work and/or one-to-one adult help to make sure they can take a full part in lessons and make the same good progress as others in the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors attend regular training to improve their skills and knowledge. They make regular visits to the school, which provide them with the information they need to question and challenge senior leaders about how well the school is performing and how well it compares to other schools nationally. They know about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They are very supportive of the headteacher and staff, and share their ambition for the school to be successful. Governors make sure that safeguarding policies and child-protection procedures fully meet statutory requirements. They are well informed about the management of teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, and they review teachers' pay accordingly. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and where necessary to tackle any underperformance. Alongside the headteacher, they manage the school's finances efficiently and are fully aware of the use of pupil premium funding and the results this funding produces.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109432
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	412652
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Stokes
Headteacher	Linda Crombie
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2009
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