

**Linlithgow Bridge Primary
School
Linlithgow Bridge
West Lothian
12 October 2004**

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1. Background

Linlithgow Bridge Primary School was inspected in June 2004 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school and the environment for learning. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed staff and pupils. They assessed the school's processes for self-evaluation. They analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parent-school association (PSA) and a group of parents.

The school serves an area in the west of Linlithgow. At the time of the inspection the roll was 278, including 57 in the nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was well above the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Very high quality leadership from the headteacher and very effective support from a principal teacher.
- Strong levels of commitment and teamwork amongst all the staff.
- A consistently high quality of learning and teaching.
- Very well behaved pupils who responded well to staff's high expectations of performance.
- Very high levels of achievement, particularly attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Strong inclusive practice through high quality pastoral care and support for pupils' learning.
- Active parental and community support for the school.

3. Views of parents and carers, pupils and staff

Parents, carers, and staff were very positive about all aspects of the school. All thought the school was well led, most considering it very well led. Parents felt very welcome in the school and were confident that staff showed a high level of care for their children. Staff felt valued and commented very positively on the team spirit amongst the staff. Pupils enjoyed the school and liked their teachers. Some parents and pupils commented adversely about lack of space in the playground and the heat in classrooms. A few parents indicated concern about the school's capacity for future catchment area needs and the limited opportunity for written teacher comment in the education authority's pupil progress report format.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The school provided pupils with a broad curriculum which was of very good quality. Class timetables were carefully designed to ensure balance across the curriculum. Teachers made well-judged use of flexibility time to strengthen the English language and mathematics programmes to ensure that all pupils were able to make good progress in their learning. The curriculum was enriched by high quality input from visiting teachers of music and physical education. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of French were developing well at all stages from P1 to P7. Focus weeks on health, road safety and French had been very well used to extend pupils' knowledge and encourage their interest in these aspects. The cluster's Active Primary Schools co-ordinator had worked well with pupils to promote physical activity and sport. The school's health education programme gave thorough coverage to hygiene, drugs and personal relationships. The school put a very good emphasis on the development of citizenship through its equality programme, pupils' work for charities and enterprise projects at all stages.

The quality of teaching was very good. Lessons were very well planned and teachers, through skilled explanations and questioning, ensured that all pupils were making appropriate progress. Teachers interacted very well with pupils and in several curricular areas, including mental arithmetic, planned learning experiences to enable pupils to participate actively in their learning. They were good at ensuring that pupils understood the purposes of lessons but lessons did not sufficiently often end with summaries of the main points of what had been learnt. Teachers made very good use of an education authority programme of work to develop pupils' skills in information and communications technology (ICT). They were also developing some very effective use of computing across the curriculum, including appropriate internet research and use of databases in class topics. At all stages, teachers made appropriate use of homework.

The range and quality of pupils' learning was very good. Pupils worked at a good, often brisk, pace in lessons and were able to concentrate and work independently on assigned tasks for extended periods. They showed interest in their work and responded very well, and often with enthusiasm, in lessons. Play was well used to reinforce work

at the early stages. More use of planned play activity would further support the development of pupils' learning skills. Pupils' learning experiences had been extended through participation in a wide range of educational trips. Their environmental awareness had been raised through eco-schools activity, including tree planting in the school grounds. Pupils had benefited from a wide range of opportunities to work together and engage in problem solving. This included tasks such as designing bridges and puppets in technology and some imaginative enterprise projects, including senior pupils acting as historical guides round Linlithgow for groups from other schools. The school intended to provide more opportunities for challenging independent work. It planned to achieve this through an increased focus on problem solving within the authority's Succeeding Together initiative.

At all stages, pupils were developing good communication skills and spoke confidently about their educational experiences. They were developing a good range of skills in a Basic Moves programme in P2, physical education throughout the school and a very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Pupils at all stages were learning to accept appropriate responsibilities. Some participated very effectively in the school's pupil council. Pupils from P4 to P7 engaged very well in a variety of buddying activities to support younger pupils. This included helping nursery pupils as part of the school's very effective transition programme from nursery to P1.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was very good. Almost all pupils at each stage had achieved appropriate levels of attainment in reading, writing, listening and talking and many pupils had exceeded these levels. Pupils not achieving these levels were making good progress towards appropriate individual targets. Pupils at P1 and P2 had made a very good start to their development of literacy skills. Throughout the school, all pupils listened attentively and with good understanding. They spoke with confidence in a range of situations. Pupils' responses were very often articulate and well thought out. Almost all pupils had developed a good range of reading skills, read well from a variety of texts and had sound comprehension skills. At all stages pupils wrote very well for a wide range of purposes including some descriptive and imaginative stories of high quality. In functional writing, pupils wrote particularly well for a good variety of contexts, including work relating to class topics. Pupils' knowledge about language at all stages was very good.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was very good. A majority of P2 pupils attained level A. Almost all pupils from P3 to P7 attained appropriate national levels with most attaining levels a year or more early. The few pupils not achieving national targets were being well supported to maintain appropriate rates of progress. At the early stages, pupils were making very good progress in learning to count and recognise shapes. At the middle and upper stages, pupils demonstrated confidence and ability across a range of appropriate mathematical skills. These included prompt recall of multiplication tables, good mental and written skills in calculation, and good understanding of fractions and percentages. Pupils had also developed good skills in information handling including presenting information using spreadsheets and

databases. Pupils at all stages had problem solving experience and some demonstrated ability in coping with challenging problems in an unfamiliar context. The school had, however, recognised the need to further develop this aspect to ensure better progression and coverage of a range of strategies.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils' care and welfare were very good. Teachers and auxiliary staff had a very good knowledge of pupils' physical and emotional needs and took account of relevant background information when necessary. Pupils felt secure and were confident of the school's ability to resolve any problems. Staff had been trained in child protection procedures and the school had a suitable set of procedures for supervising pupils and dealing with any incidents involving their health and safety.

Teachers gave a very good level of support to pupils to enable them to make progress in their learning. They made appropriate use of groups formed on the basis of prior attainment. Teachers were helped to meet the additional needs of individual pupils by high quality support from a good range of classroom and support assistants. The learning support teacher had developed very effective programmes for pupils with learning difficulties. Liaison with the class teachers helped ensure that lessons were very well planned and that tasks and learning activities were very well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Support was provided mainly in English language, but mathematics and social skills were also covered when required. Very detailed assessment records, which included future targets and next steps in learning, were kept for each pupil. Good quality individualised education programmes had been put in place and records of needs had been appropriately opened for a few pupils.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The overall quality of accommodation was very good. The building was secure and accessible. It provided high quality attractive accommodation for pupils and staff. However, particularly in the afternoons, some classrooms became so hot and airless as to adversely affect the quality of pupils' learning. A large hall and two general purpose rooms were very well used for a range of activities including physical education, drama, music and extra-curricular activities. Staff made very good use of display space to create a stimulating and welcoming environment. The playground was well designed to stimulate pupils' play and an adjacent community sports pitch was also well used for sports.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>The school had a very welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Pupils behaved very well and demonstrated pride in the school. Relationships between staff and pupils were very good and teachers made effective and regular use of praise and school reward systems to encourage and motivate. Pupils responded well to staff's high expectations of work rate and performance. The school's strongly inclusive approach to education was supported by its new equality education programme which actively promoted positive attitudes towards ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Pupils were dealt with fairly in the day to day work of the school and pupils with special educational needs were included very well in the whole range of school activities. Regular school assemblies provided good opportunities for religious observance.</p>
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>In its first two years, the school had very successfully built up a wide range of very good partnerships with parents and the community. The School Board and PSA had provided a high level of support in connection with the new building, social events and fund raising. Parents were kept very well informed about the work of the school through a range of newsletters, brochures and meetings. Pupils and parents had been consulted in a survey which had obtained their views on the school and identified action points to meet points raised. The school had also received valued support from a number of local people and businesses. The integrated schools initiative had helped enhance the well planned transition links to Linlithgow Academy, particularly for vulnerable pupils.</p>

7. Improving the school

Linlithgow Bridge Primary School, although opened less than two years ago, was already a thriving and dynamic institution. The staff, very well supported by parents and the community, had worked hard to establish a supportive climate within which all pupils received the encouragement and support they needed. In this they had been very successful. The school was a happy place where pupils benefited from a well planned curriculum, high quality teaching and an enthusiastic and caring staff.

The headteacher provided outstanding leadership. She had a clear vision for the school's development and had been able to realise this through leading by example, delegating effectively and creating a team spirit within which all staff felt valued. She had been very well supported by a principal teacher and other staff who had taken on specific tasks. They had each worked effectively within their areas of responsibility to

improve significantly aspects of the curriculum, resources and approaches to learning and teaching.

The headteacher had involved all staff very well in evaluating the effectiveness of the school. She had established an open climate of self-evaluation which involved monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching by promoted staff, advice to teachers on their planning and systematic evaluation of progress in development plan priorities. Staff had recently collaborated very well in identifying the priorities for the school's improvement plan. The school had a very high capacity for continued improvement.

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- in line with the priorities in its improvement plan, further extend the breadth and level of challenge in pupils' learning experiences.
- reduce the build-up of heat in classrooms in the course of the school day.

What happens next?

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents and carers. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents and carers.

Grant Mathison
HM Inspector

12 October 2004

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

- Structure of the curriculum
- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Pupils' attainment in English language
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Pastoral care
- Accommodation and facilities
- Climate and relationships
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community
- Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities
- Leadership
- Self-evaluation

We judged the following to be good

- No aspects were found to be in this category

We judged the following to be fair

- No aspects were found to be in this category

We judged the following to be unsatisfactory

- No aspects were found to be in this category

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

<p>What pleased parents and carers most</p>	<p>What parents and carers would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of children and treated them fairly. • Children found school work stimulating and challenging and enjoyed being at school. • Staff set high standards and encouraged children to work to the best of their ability. • Staff made parents welcome and parents' evenings were helpful and informative. • School buildings were kept in good order. • The school was well led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents and carers commented on lack of space in the playground and excessive heat in classrooms.
<p>What pleased pupils most</p>	<p>What pupils would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They enjoyed being at school and felt teachers knew them well and listened to what they had to say. • Teachers expected them to work hard and helped them when they were stuck. • They felt safe and well looked after in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils did not raise any significant concerns.
<p>What pleased staff most</p>	<p>What staff would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff enjoyed working in the school and thought it was very well led. • The level of concern the staff showed for the care and welfare of pupils. • The level of communication and co-operation amongst staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff did not raise any significant concerns.

How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education and Cultural Services, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Harburn Suite, First Floor, Stadium House, Alderstone Road, Livingston EH54 7DN or by telephoning 01506 602739. Copies are also available on our website: www.hmie.gov.uk.

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of the inspection or about this report, you should write in the first instance to Frank Crawford, HMCi at HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from that office and on our website.

If you are still dissatisfied, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman directly or through your member of the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government Departments and Agencies. She will not normally consider your complaint before the HMIE complaints procedure has been used. Instead, she will usually ask you to give us the chance to put matters right if we can.

Complaints to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman must be submitted within 12 months of the date of publication of this report.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

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