

Longford Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103648
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	355420
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Walford
Headteacher	Mandy Walker
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed the 11 teachers who were teaching at the time of the inspection. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, staff and pupils, and inspectors spoke to some parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised the arrangements in place to safeguard pupils, the school's development plan and self-evaluation, as well as assessments and data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress. Questionnaire returns from 115 parents and carers were analysed as well as returns from pupils in Key Stage 2 and from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are pupils making enough progress in English and mathematics, and particularly those who have the potential to exceed the attainment levels expected for their age?
- Does the teaching offer the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds?
- How effectively do senior staff and the governing body assess and evaluate pupils' achievement and learning to sustain improvements to attainment and teaching?

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class for three-year-olds, who all attend part-time, and a full-time Reception class for four-year-olds. Approximately 40% of pupils are of White British heritage and others come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, of which the largest group is pupils of Indian heritage. A higher-than-average percentage of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at different times as many families are in temporary accommodation in the area served by the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that of most schools. The main areas of additional need include pupils with moderate or specific learning difficulties related to speech, language and communication. The school has a number of national accreditations, including Healthy Schools status and the Green Flag award, the latter in recognition of the school's success in promoting key principles of sustainability. The headteacher joined the school at the start of this school term.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Longford Park provides a good education. Its pupils achieve well and demonstrate enthusiasm for all that the staff offer them. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, the large majority reach the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics. This represents good learning and progress in relation to pupils' starting points, due largely to mainly good teaching. The school provides strong pastoral support and encourages respect for different beliefs and cultures. Underpinning its success are effective partnerships with parents and carers, as well as with other schools, colleges, businesses and agencies that support families. Pupils, staff, parents and carers expressed mainly positive views, for example, a parent reflected the views of most in observing, 'My child loves coming to school to learn and to see his friends and he talks about the school positively.'

Lessons are engaging, purposeful and enjoyable. There has been good improvement to teachers' planning since the last inspection, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The skilled support provided by well qualified teaching assistants enables pupils who find learning difficult to make good progress. Similarly, pupils in the early stages of learning English are provided with appropriate language resources and support to acquire spoken English quickly. Test results show that these two groups make accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics, building on the good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

National test results show that the proportion of pupils exceeding the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics is below that of most schools. Teachers do not always devise sufficiently challenging learning objectives for more able pupils. Assessment has improved since the last inspection, enabling teachers accurately to check pupils' progress. This is particularly effective in assessing those who join the school at different times to plan work that builds on their previous learning. However, teachers are not always checking regularly enough to ensure that more able pupils reach their targets.

Pupils are well behaved, enterprising and show initiative. The school council is successful in representing pupils' views with good opportunities for pupils to support others through, for example, friendship groups that welcome new arrivals. Attendance is in line with the national average but fluctuates. A small number of pupils do not attend regularly which has a negative effect on their learning. The school is very committed to supporting pupils whose circumstances deem them vulnerable and works closely with welfare agencies and families but there is still more that should be done to improve attendance. The curriculum is well-devised to provide a broad range of interesting topics for pupils to study that evoke interest, curiosity and enjoyment. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities they have to play musical instruments, including drumming lessons, as well as learning to speak Spanish and take part in a wide range of sport, dance and drama activities, which

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encourages pupils to be healthy and active. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community, particularly in improving the local park and promoting sustainability.

The governing body is diligent in exercising its statutory responsibilities, although it is not as involved as it should be in checking the performance of staff and pupils. It has yet to establish more systematic links with staff with management or subject responsibilities, which limits its ability to check priorities in the development plan to measure their impact on school improvement. The two assistant headteachers have managed the transitional stage well during which the governing body was appointing a new headteacher. The headteacher has already evaluated the school's performance and development plan accurately and works effectively with staff to move the school forward. The school is well placed to improve further and provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the teaching increases the progress made by more able pupils in English and mathematics by:
 - providing specific and more ambitious learning objectives and tasks in lessons that meet their specific needs
 - checking their work and attainment regularly to ensure that they all reach their expected targets.
- Step up the programme of monitoring, audit and review by:
 - ensuring that the governing body is more involved in setting priorities for improvement and systematically evaluates the impact of the school's development plan
 - establishing stronger links between the governing body and staff with management responsibilities to monitor pupils' achievements and set appropriate targets that will sustain school improvement.
- Improve attendance rates to minimise the disruption that absence causes to pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and thrive on opportunities to reflect and learn, for example, when planning narrative writing or discussing story plans with others. Pupils are keen to answer questions or work with others to generate ideas, as when pupils in Year 4, during an excellent English lesson, thought of different ways to bring their characters alive in their imaginative writing.

Pupils are able to apply core reading, writing and number skills to broaden their understanding, for example, when Year 5 pupils applied their knowledge of numbers and fractions to draw pictorial representations of mixed numbers accurately. Pupils use their computer skills competently when researching facts and topics, although there are sometimes missed opportunities for more able pupils to extend their learning further towards higher levels, which slows their progress.

Pupils who join with little or no spoken English or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities gain confidence by contributing to class discussions. They answer

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questions independently because they have the necessary support or resources to aid them, such as writing boards and visual prompts to express themselves in complete sentences. Pupils of all backgrounds make good progress, reflecting the school's commitment to meeting the academic and personal needs of every pupil.

Pupils feel safe and behave well. They adopt healthy lifestyles through eating balanced lunches and fruit, as well as taking part in a good range of sports and activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Personal diaries in Year 6 enable pupils to reflect on their experiences during school holidays which improve their spiritual and moral development as they write with modesty about the contribution they make to their communities and families. Pupils have a good understanding of, and respect for, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. They benefit from opportunities to accept a broad range of responsibilities such as mentors, Eco and recycling monitors and playground buddies, which encourage them to care for their local community as well as look out for other pupils.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The positive climate for learning in lessons and consistent expectations set by teachers encourage pupils to behave and achieve well. Nearly all the teaching observed was good and a common characteristic was the warm and trusting relationships between adults and pupils. Teachers share each lesson's objectives with pupils and explain how they are going

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to acquire new knowledge and skills. Assessment is used well to group pupils by ability and this helps teachers to monitor progress towards specific learning targets. However, some learning objectives are not ambitious enough to extend the learning of pupils who have the potential to reach higher levels, and sometimes it is not made clear to pupils which steps they need to learn to reach their targets. The most effective teaching sets high expectations and has a consistent pace to learning which also includes extended tasks for more able pupils.

Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to provide clear visual prompts and allow pupils opportunities to demonstrate to others their ideas. This was evident in most mathematics lessons when pupils were invited to explain or illustrate, using whiteboards, their understanding of a particular method of calculation.

The school has improved its curriculum which is having a positive impact on pupils' academic, personal, social and emotional development. The creative and performing arts are strengths, with good opportunities for pupils to play musical instruments or achieve high standards of artwork. There are good opportunities for pupils to link different subjects to broaden their experiences by studying a range of interesting topics and projects, many of which are followed up by educational visits, for example, when pupils visited a local abbey to dress up and go back in time as part of their history project. Teachers plan their own timetables to cover every curriculum subject each week, but the quality of these varies across classes, resulting in some imbalances in the range of subjects being covered each day and the regularity with which pupils revisit what had previously been learned. As a result, in some classes pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to consolidate their learning in subjects other than English and mathematics.

The staff are very supportive and committed to providing pupils with good care, guidance and support. Careful tracking and assessments of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have helped to accelerate their progress so that most reach standards that exceed those of their peers nationally. The staff devise good plans and intervention programmes that are carefully targeted to remove barriers for those who experience language or learning difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff have been effective in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection through well-devised training and the monitoring of lessons. The new

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headteacher has begun a process of review which has already recognised the need to establish clearer responsibilities for managing subjects and phases of the school.

The process of self-evaluation, audit and review is accurate and thorough enough to establish the right priorities in the school development plan aimed at further school improvement and a sustained rise in pupils' attainment and achievement. The governing body supports the school well, although has not been as involved to the same extent as senior staff in assessing and evaluating the school's performance. As yet there is no systematic process in place to involve the governing body in school development planning and monitoring, which limits its ability to measure the impact of school improvement on pupils' achievement and staff performance.

Since the last inspection, improved assessment systems have contributed well to improving teachers' planning. Moderation meetings to look at pupils' work have improved teachers' understanding of assessment. However, there are some inconsistencies in the progress that more able pupils make because checking systems and reviews of progress are not regular enough to ensure that all pupils reach their learning targets.

The school listens to, and acts on, the views of its community, which accounts for the good level of satisfaction expressed in questionnaires. There is a commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, as well as a determination to tackle all forms of discrimination, which is also reflected in the sensitive care and management of pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good as pupils are encouraged to learn about the main world religions with good opportunities for them to experience different cultural traditions and learn about the diversity of the community in the local area. There are very good inclusion arrangements in place to welcome new arrivals who join the school at different times. The leadership team, governing body and staff have been successful in raising the profile of the school through good communication and, for example, home visits undertaken by staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were being met in line with statutory requirements with appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that only suitable adults come into contact with pupils. Risk assessments are carried out but these are not yet reviewed systematically by the staff and governing body. There are plans to introduce a more robust system of risk assessments which includes gathering the views of pupils, parents, carers and staff.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children join the Nursery or Reception class with skills and aptitudes that are well below those expected of three- and four-year-olds, especially in speech, language and communication. Attainment is in line with that expected in most areas of learning by the time the children start Year 1, so that Nursery and Reception children make consistently good progress. Attainment in communication, language and literacy is just below that expected by Year 1 but the children have made rapid progress in speech and language. The staff provide a stimulating range of activities that broaden children's knowledge and understanding, laying secure foundations for their learning and development. The children settle quickly and make a good contribution to the setting when tidying away or getting themselves ready to play outdoors.

Children make good progress linking letters and sounds to words through songs, nursery rhymes and story books. Staff skilfully use words, pictures and familiar objects to encourage children to read aloud with the correct letter sounds. This accelerates children's early reading and writing development. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way children learn their letter sounds between the Nursery and Reception class, resulting in variations in the pace of learning and progress that pupils make in early writing. The staff are aware of this with plans already in place to check that letters and sounds (phonics) are taught using consistent methods.

There are warm and trusting relationships where each child is valued and rewarded for good behaviour and effort. Assessments and observations of the children are carried out by all adults to ensure that the staff accurately plan the next steps or targets for children to work towards. Children explore and develop their physical and creative skills using different textures through colour mixing, drawing, sand and water play and painting. Nursery and Reception children benefit from working in well-resourced and exciting outdoor and indoor areas safely and productively. Teachers' planning incorporates time for

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the children in both settings to mix by working and playing together during 'free-flow time', helping them to generate their own ideas and engage in different indoor and outdoor activities that they choose for themselves. This improves their confidence and independence. However, some children find it difficult to choose activities that will hold their attention for good periods of time, which does not sustain or extend their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well by both settings, despite being in separate buildings and there is a smooth transition between the Reception class and Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires hold mainly positive views and this constitutes nearly half of all parents and carers, which is above average compared with most schools. They believe that this is a caring, open and supportive school. Inspection findings support these views. Despite a very small number of concerns about the progress their children are making, most parents and carers have commented that the teaching is effective and that they trust the school to help their children to do well in school. Inspection findings agree with these views but would like the school to accelerate the progress of more able pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longford Park 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 115 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 260 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	58	46	40	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	59	45	39	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	39	63	55	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	36	69	60	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	58	50	57	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	43	62	54	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	37	69	60	1	1	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)	35	30	73	63	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	37	67	58	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	41	59	51	5	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	38	60	52	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	38	64	56	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	52	54	47	1	1	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



20 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Longford Park Primary School, Coventry, CV6 7AT

You were all so welcoming and the inspectors really enjoyed talking to you. Inspectors have judged that you go to a good school. We were pleased with your good behaviour and the way you try hard and are polite and sensible in lessons and at other times. Your work, particularly your story writing, diaries and mathematics work, as well as your artwork displayed on walls, is of a good standard; well done! You are making good progress in lessons and are achieving well in English, mathematics and science because your teachers and support staff provide you with mainly good lessons and an interesting and broad curriculum. You have told us or written in questionnaires that you enjoy learning. One of you told me that, 'The teachers are not too strict and put a lot of fun in all the lessons.' The inspectors agree with you: lessons are fun and you are allowed to ask questions and explore your own ideas. The new headteacher has settled in well and inspectors were pleased to see how welcome you and your parents and carers have made her feel in school already. The senior leadership team are continually improving the school and together with staff and governors have successfully made improvements since the last time your school was inspected three years ago.

Inspectors have judged that some of you should be doing a bit better so have asked your teachers to provide you with more opportunities to reach higher levels to raise standards further. Your teachers can do this by giving you more challenging targets to work towards and show you clear steps that will help you reach these targets. We have also asked your teachers to make regular checks to ensure that all of you reach your learning targets. The inspectors have also asked the governing body to step up the work it does and work more closely with the staff to check how well you and your teachers are doing. Inspectors have noticed that some pupils are not attending school regularly enough so have asked the school to work with families to improve attendance further.

You can all help too by carrying on trying hard and keeping up your attendance by always coming to school every day and on time. I wish you, your parents, staff and governors the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Her Majesty's Inspector

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